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CAUSES, ORIGINS, AND LESSONS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

CAUSES, ORIGINS, AND LESSONS OF THE
VIETNAM WAR

MAY 9, 10, AND 11, 1972

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations

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CONTENTS

Page

Preface — v

Statements by:

- Gelb, Leslie H., Brookings Institution — 2
- Thomson, James C., Jr., Harvard University — 13
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., City University of New York — 59
- Chomsky, Noam, Massachusetts Institute of Technology — 80
- White, Frank M., former major, Office of Strategic Services; former reporter, Time magazine — 145
- Moffat, Abbot Low, former chief, Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State — 161

Insertions for the record:

- Prepared statement of Leslie H. Gelb — 8
- Prepared statement of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr — 71
- Prepared statement of Noam Chomsky — 89
- Charles de Gaulle on Vietnam — 130
- TV interview with President Nixon of July 1, 1970 — 134
- Frank White's dispatch to Life magazine describing experiences in Vietnam, 1945–46 — 154
- Prepared statement of Abbot Low Moffat — 172

Appendix:

- "The Essential Domino: American Politics and Vietnam," article by Leslie H. Gelb, Foreign Affairs, April 1972 — 207
- "Vietnam: The System Worked," article by Leslie H. Gelb, Foreign Policy, summer 1971 — 225

Documents relating to OSS activity in French Indochina:

- Introduction — 241

I. The "Deer" Mission to Viet Minh Headquarters, July-September, 1945:

- Letter of instruction to Major Thomas, May 16, 1945 — 243
- "Deer" Report No. 1, July 17, 1945 — 244
- "Deer" Report, July 20, 1945 — 248
- Report on "Deer" Mission—Maj. A. K. Thomas, September. 17, 1945 — 251
- The Viet Minh Party or League—Maj. A. K. Thomas — 265
- Pictures from the "Deer" Mission — 273

II. "Detachment 404": Mission to Saigon:

- Operation "Embankment" (memorandum from Maj. Peter Dewey), August 25, 1945 — 281
- Chronological list of dates for Mission "Embankment" (memorandum from Maj. Herbert Bluechel), September 17, 1945 — 282
- Political aims and philosophy of the Viet Minh Government of French Indo-China, and their attitude toward Americans (memorandum from Capt. Herbert Bluechel), September 30, 1945 — 283
- Comments on reports published by the Allied Control Commission, Saigon, concerning the events of September 26, 1945 (memorandum by Capt. Herbert Bluechel), September 30, 1945 — 285
- Affidavit by Capt. Herbert Bluechel relating to the death of Maj. Peter Dewey, October 13, 1945 — 286
- Affidavit by Capt. Frank White relating to the death of Maj. Peter Dewey, October 13, 1945 — 292

Appendix—Continued

Documents relating to OSS activity in French Indochina—Continued

II. "Detachment 404": Mission to Saigon—Continued

Page

Investigation of death of Maj. Peter Dewey (memorandum by Maj. F. N. Small with map), October 25, 1945 ---- 296

III. Secret Intelligence Branch (S.I.) reports and documents relating to the Viet Minh:

Calling card of Vo Nguyen Giap with note ---- 301

Appeal by Ho Chi Minh to "Fellow Countrymen," September 5, 1945 ---- 302

Interview with Bao Dai, former emperor of Annam, September 19, 1945 ---- 303

Interview with Prince Souphanouvong of Laos, September 19, 1945 ---- 304

Interview with Ho Chi Minh, September 19, 1945 ---- 305

Report on the Provisional Government, F.I.C., September 20, 1945 ---- 307

Political information (from Swift), October 17, 1945 ---- 311

IV. Strategic Service Unit "intelligence dissemination" reports from French Indochina ---- 327

Military and political information, February 28, 1946 ---- 328

Political information, March 4, 1946 ---- 330

Military information, March 6, 1946 ---- 331

French and Chinese clashes, March 6, 1946 ---- 332

Political information, March 17, 1946 ---- 333

Political information, March 17, 18, 1946 ---- 334

French troops enter Hanoi, March 18, 1946 ---- 335

Political and military information, March 19, 1946 ---- 336

Political and economic information, March 20, 1946 ---- 337

Political information—North Indo-China, March 20, 1946 ---- 338

1946 ---- 338

Military and political information, March 22, 1946 ---- 339

Political information, March 24, 1946 ---- 340

PREFACE

FEBRUARY 1973.

During three days of hearings in May 1972, the Foreign Relations Committee heard testimony describing the origin and evolution of American involvement in Vietnam. Appearing as witnesses before the Committee were Messrs. Leslie Gelb, James C. Thomson, Noam Chomsky, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Abbot Low Moffat, and Frank White. In testimony covering the years 1945–72, each man shared with the committee his particular experiences and extensive knowledge in an effort to portray a full picture of the Vietnam conflict.

Of particular interest was the description by former Office of Strategic Service (OSS) Officer Frank White of the conversations he held with Ho Chi Minh immediately after World War II, and the extent of contact Ho and the Viet Minh had with other OSS officers. As a result of Mr. White's testimony, I requested the intelligence reports detailing these early contacts. With the assistance of the National Archives, the Foreign Relations Committee has recently secured the declassification and release of a selection of these documents. They are being made public for the first time in the appendix of this print. Necessary deletions have been made for security reasons and are noted in the text wherever appropriate.

The Committee decided at its meeting in executive session on February 6 that these hearings with the previously classified material should be published.

J. W. FULBRIGHT, *Chairman.*

CAUSES, ORIGINS, AND LESSONS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1972

United States Senate,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 4221, New Senate Office Building, Senator J. W. Fulbright (chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Fulbright, Muskie, Aiken and Percy.

The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

OPENING STATEMENT

The United States today has 68,000 troops stationed in South Vietnam, with an additional 52,000 men on ships offshore, 37,000 Air Force personnel in neighboring Thailand and 10,000 on Guam. The arrival of the sixth aircraft carrier stationed off Vietnam brings the number of combat aircraft to 1,000. On some days in past weeks these aircraft have flown as many as 1,000 sorties. As of April 29 of this year, over 55,861 Americans have lost their lives in Indochina.

This week's hearings on the causes, origins and lessons of the Vietnam war, while historical in emphasis, cannot overlook the fact that the United States continues to be deeply involved in this tragic war in Vietnam.

The questions we will address in these hearings are: Why are we fighting in Vietnam? How did we get there? What were the reasons for the initial U.S. commitment? Have these reasons changed, and if so, why do we persist?

The United States has been actively involved in Vietnam for well over a decade although the roots of that involvement stretch back as far as the Second World War. By reviewing the history of the deepening U.S. involvement in Indochina, we hope this inquiry will yield lessons from which present and future policy might benefit.

Within the government and the scholarly community, a number of explanations of U.S. policy in Vietnam have developed during the past years. In the next few days of hearings we will consider a variety of views and perspectives on the war.

By applying these alternative critical perspectives to the history of U.S. policy in Vietnam, we may arrive at a better understanding of the causes, origins and escalation of the war.

A recent, very important contribution to that understanding was the declassification and publication of "United States-Vietnam Relations. 1945–1967," popularly known as the "Pentagon Papers." This compilation of documents and analyses sheds light on much of the official thinking behind critical decisions taken in the war.

To contribute to a better understanding of these decisions, the Committee on Foreign Relations has undertaken its own staff studies of important turning points in the war. The first study, "Vietnam Commitments, 1961," dealt with the critical decisions made during the first year of the Kennedy Administration.

The second study, "The United States and Vietnam; 1944–1947," examined in detail American attitudes toward Ho Chi Minh during and after the Second World War.

A third study on negotiations remains classified at the insistence of the Department of State.

Two more studies, one on the events leading up to the Diem coup and the other on U.S. bombing policies, are in the process of being completed. In preparing these studies, the committee staff has relied heavily on the Pentagon history. Despite our requests to several executive agencies for additional documentation, these have been denied us.

INVITATIONS TO TESTIFY

This week's hearings on the origins of the war are a continuation of the effort to advance the dialogue over and further understanding of the U.S. role in the Vietnam war. To bring a broad spectrum of perspectives to bear on the causes, origins and lessons of the war, the committee has invited distinguished scholars and former governmental officials to testify. The committee was particularly anxious to obtain the benefit of the experience of officials who had been actually involved in early decisionmaking on the war. Unfortunately, the high-ranking officials who were invited to appear either refused to testify or backed out at the last moment. Only former Secretary of State Dean Rusk has indicated that he might be able to appear, but at a later date.

TODAY'S WITNESSES

As our first witness we are fortunate to have Dr. Leslie Gelb from Brookings Institution who served as the Chairman of the Vietnam Task Force in the Department of Defense which prepared the Pentagon history of the war. He will be followed by Professor James C. Thomson, Jr., from Harvard University, who served in the State Department and on the White House staff during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

Dr. Gelb, we are very pleased to have you. Since the hearings were set, of course, there have been some significant changes in the situation. Whether or not you wish to comment on those, of course, is up to you, but we would be very pleased now if you would present your testimony.

STATEMENT OF LESLIE H. GELB, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Mr. Gelb. Mr. Chairman, I am honored by your committee's invitation to present testimony on the subject of Vietnam.

What is really on my mind is the President's speech last night and the actions that will flow from it.

I believe my testimony is relevant to that speech and those actions, but I would be glad to comment further on the President's speech later in my testimony.

The purpose of your hearings is history, but with respect to Vietnam the past and the present are irrevocably interlocked.

The mind-numbing sameness of the war and the overwhelming fact that this war is not yet history compel us to be contemporary historians with all the attendant risks.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to severely summarize my statement and ask that it be entered in the record in its entirety.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, indeed; it will all be entered and you may proceed.

Mr. GELB. My testimony will deal with (1) the past, specifically, the causes of United States involvement in the war, and (2) the present, specifically the lessons of the past that bear on today.

Wars are supposed to tell us about ourselves. Are we a wise and just Nation? Or are we foolish and aggressive, merciless or humane, well-led or misled, vital or decadent, hopeful or hopeless? Nations in war and after war, win or lose, try to scratch away at the paste or glue or traditions or values that held their societies together and see of what they are made. It is arguable whether a society should indulge in such self-scrutiny. Societies are, as Edmund Burke wrote, "delicate, intricate wholes" that are more easily damaged than improved when subjected to the glare of Grand Inquisitors.

But in the case of our own society and the war in Vietnam, too many people are seeking answers and are entitled to them, and many are only too eager to fill in the blanks. The families and friends of those who were killed and wounded will want to know whether it was worth it after all. Intellectuals will want to know "Why Vietnam?" Men seeking and holding political office will demand to know who was responsible.

The answers to these questions will themselves become political facts and forces shaping the United States' role in the world and our lives at home for years to come.

OFFERED EXPLANATIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

Central to this inquiry is the issue of causes of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. I have found eight discernible explanations advanced in the Vietnam literature. Different authors combine these explanations in various ways, but I will keep them separate for the purpose of analysis. I will then sketch my own position.

Let me just list, Mr. Chairman, the eight different explanations that have been offered: (1) the arrogance of power; (2) bureaucratic politics; (3) our domestic political situation and forces; (4) imperialism; (5) the explanation of men making hard choices pragmatically; (6) balance of power politics, talk of honor and keeping commitments, credibility of our commitments; (7) the slippery slope thesis, that we got into the war in Vietnam through excessive optimism and inadvertence; and (8) I think, most importantly, the explanation that we got into Vietnam principally to stop communism.

HOW AND WITH WHAT EXPECTATIONS UNITED STATES BECAME INVOLVED

As of this point in my own research, I advance three propositions to explain how and with what expectations the United States became involved in this war:

First, the U.S.'s involvement in Vietnam is not mainly or mostly a story of step by step, inadvertent descent into unforeseen quicksand. It is primarily a story of why U.S. leaders considered that it was vital not to lose Vietnam by force to communism. Our leaders believed Vietnam to be vital not for itself but for what they thought its loss would mean internationally and domestically. Previous involvement made further involvement more unavoidable and, to this extent, commitments were inherited. But judgments of Vietnam's vitalness, beginning with the Korean war, were sufficient in themselves to set the course for escalation.

Second, our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory in Vietnam. In my opinion, they were doing only what they thought was minimally necessary at each stage to keep Indochina, and later South Vietnam, out of Communist hands. In a way, this made our policy a functional equivalent of escalation and a functional equivalent of seeking victory.

This forced our Presidents to be brakemen, to do less than those who were urging military victory and to reject proposals for disengagement. It also meant that our Presidents wanted a negotiated settlement without fully realizing—though realizing more than their critics—that a civil war cannot be ended by political compromise.

Third, our Presidents and most of their lieutenants were not deluded by optimistic reports of progress and did not proceed on the basis of wishful thinking about winning a military victory in South Vietnam. They recognized that the steps they were taking were not adequate to win the war and that unless Hanoi relented, they would have to do more and more.

Their strategy was to persevere in the hope that their will to continue, if not the practical effects of their actions, would cause the Communists to relent.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record of my testimony the article in which I developed these propositions and expand on these propositions.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, without objection, it will be so done. (See appendix.)

PRESIDENT NIXON'S JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUATION OF WAR

Mr. GELB. President Nixon may no longer be devoted to simple anticommunism as the main reason for pursuing the Vietnam war. His administration has done much to rid the public debate of the old cold war cliches. The President's last two speeches, however, in which he frequently invoked the "Communist" threat, does raise suspicions about changes in his thinking. Nevertheless, President Nixon has for the most part justified continuation of the war along two lines: first, he says that it is crucial to our foreign policy and, second, he says that losing would lead to a nightmare of recrimination at home undermining political support for U.S. interest abroad.

CENTRAL TASK BEFORE COMMITTEE

From my vantage point the central task before this committee is to evaluate the President's rationales on their merits, of course, but also against the lessons we should have learned from 25 years of war in Vietnam.

LESSONS WE SHOULD HAVE LEARNED

Lesson one concerns the Saigon government and military forces. They always get better, but they never get good enough. The current North Vietnamese offensive, whatever the immediate results, shows once again that the Saigon forces cannot defend themselves without massive American assistance. Regardless of what can be said about the improvement and bravery of the Saigon forces, one simple fact obscures all the rest—a North Vietnamese force of some 100,000-plus men are fighting and beating a 1 million-plus South Vietnamese armed force backed up by about 800 tactical air sorties per day. Something is wrong somewhere. Something always has been wrong.

The lesson is that military power without political cohesiveness and support is an empty shell. Without the legitimacy, without political legitimacy in a government and the quest for it in South Vietnam seems never ending, the Saigon regime perpetually will require American support.

Lesson two concerns the Hanoi government. While annual hints and predictions have it that the North Vietnamese are about to expire, their will to fight seems undiminished and they keep coming back. It is not necessary to glorify Hanoi to face this fact. The brutality of Hanoi's methods of warfare have matched, if not exceeded, Saigon's, but something for them always has gone right somewhere.

The lesson, I believe, is that time and determination are on the side of the elemental tide of nationalism and that the leadership in Hanoi, for historical reasons, always has symbolized this basic political force.

Lesson three comes back to the nature of the war itself. The war in Vietnam was and is a civil war and a war for national independence, in my opinion. The central question of who shall rule Vietnam would have been settled on just these terms long ago had it not been for the intervention of outside powers. The reason, I think, is that the war will never end as long as outside powers keep it going. This goes for Russia and China as well as for the United States. But the United States has a particular responsibility for prolonging this war. We must face the tragic and brutal fact and probability that more Vietnamese will die by the continuation of the present war than will die, in my opinion, from the bloodletting following its conclusion.

We can attribute great principles to our involvement in Vietnam but these principles can mean only continuing death to the Vietnamese and in the end the struggle will be resolved as it began, by the Vietnamese themselves.

A fourth lesson related to the others concerns bombing and, I believe, mining of ports. The lesson is that more bombing and mining will bring neither victory nor peace.

More bombing and mining in North Vietnam will, in time, somewhat curtail Hanoi's present offensive in the south but at the risk of once again setting back U.S. relations with Russia and China and at the price of countless civilian lives.

More bombing in South Vietnam will impede Hanoi's offensive at the expense of killing and making refugees out of hundreds of thousands of people.

What, then, is the purpose of such senseless slaughter?

A fifth lesson concerns domestic dissent. Many people who participated in the efforts of the last 7 years to change our policy say that they think they were wasting their time. I do not agree. Their opposition and the potential threat of greater public opposition was a constant factor in the deliberations of American policymakers over the years.

The lesson is that dissenters may not have been powerful but they were not powerless. Responsible criticism often centered in these chambers. played an important and honorable role in preventing worse outrages from taking place.

A sixth and final lesson stemming from the others concerns dealing with dilemmas and ending the war.

DILEMMAS PRESENTED TO UNITED STATES BY VIETNAM

Given the constant goal of a non-Communist south Vietnam since the Korean war, Vietnam has presented the United States with dilemmas.

At first our leaders realized there was no chance of defeating the Vietminh unless France granted independence to Vietnam, but that if France granted independence to Vietnam she would not remain and fight the war. So we could not win with France and we could not win without her. Then our leaders recognized that Diem was hopelessly losing the support of the people but, at the same time, that he represented the only hope of future political stability. So we could not win with Diem and we could not win without him. Later, our leaders came to the view that the Saigon regime could not survive without massive American involvement and that the North Vietnamese effort seemed able to survive despite our efforts. So, again, the war cannot be won with the United States nor without the United States.

REASONS GIVEN FOR PERSISTING QUESTIONED

In full knowledge of these dilemmas, our leaders persisted nevertheless. Each successor group of leaders thought that they might just succeed where their predecessors had failed, or at least that they would prevent defeat. Our leaders plowed on for the range of reasons discussed earlier in this paper.

For many years, until the American people saw the policy was not working and began doubting the word of their elected officials, these reasons found a generous reception. It is not difficult to understand why proposals for U.S. disengagement fell on deaf ears. People believed in this war for a very long time, but this is a different time and we have, I think, a new and more sensible lens through which to view the war.

The old rationales about nations falling like dominoes to communism and our own Nation falling into the pit of McCarthyism no longer, in my judgment, can stand close scrutiny. Extremists looking for scapegoats will try to cause trouble but every indication is that the American people want out of this war. Nor should U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam presage a return to popular isolationism. If continuing commitments elsewhere in the world are honestly explained and seem reasonable to the American people, they have a proven record of being willing to bear international burdens.

As for the fate of Vietnam being central to the credibility and successes of all U.S. foreign policy, as President Nixon has often suggested, this is a highly questionable proposition. What wisdom is there that causes President Nixon to link what he calls the "dignity of the office of the Presidency" to the fate of the Saigon forces? Who still believes that any of our allies expect us to fight indefinitely? How many of our allies were worried enough about the fate of Vietnam to make a meaningful contribution to its defense? If anything, the domino theory may now be true in reverse, that is, if we continue the war, this act alone might jeopardize the growing pursuit of common interests between Washington and Peking and Moscow and might undermine American political support for a continuing U.S. security role in the world.

It would be better to find some magic diplomatic formula that could reconcile all parties in Vietnam in a free and democratic process. No civil war has been settled by political compromise. Every president—even President Nixon's generous terms when measured by the standard of nation-to-nation negotiations cannot resolve the hatreds and stakes of a civil war. Civil warring parties will not risk their lives and their lifelong aspirations in the throw of some electoral dice. Elections require trust and a common loyalty. These are precisely the ingredients which are missing in a civil war.

At this point in history, the issue of morality as between the Hanoi and Saigon regimes is not a clearcut matter. The refugees are fleeing south, not north. But when they get south they develop no loyalty to Saigon. It is not easy now to declaim whether Hanoi or Saigon is right about who should rule South Vietnam. But I do believe that the United States is not the keeper of Vietnamese morality and that it is wrong for our Nation to perpetuate this war.

WHAT PENTAGON PAPERS DO AND DO NOT TELL US

The Pentagon papers, the matter specifically before this committee, tell the story of how the executive branch of our government perpetuated the Vietnam war. They do not tell us about the role of the Congress, the news media, the political climate in our country and our values, or the reactions of other nations. Nor do the Pentagon papers answer the question of what kind of nation are we, the question which I posed at the beginning of this presentation. We may well have this answer in the coming weeks.

ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE VIETNAM DILEMMA

The only way, in my judgment, to resolve the Vietnam dilemma is for the United States to set a date certain for the complete withdrawal of our land, sea and air forces from the Indochina theater in return for our prisoners of war. We must also stand ready to provide refuge for those desiring to leave South Vietnam. This is not a good alternative—

the one I am proposing. There are costs that we cannot run away from, but it is better than persisting in an endless, hopeless and tragic war.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Mr. Gelb's prepared statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF LESLIE H. GELB ON VIETNAM: CAUSES OF THE WAR AND LESSONS LEARNED

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored by your committee's invitation to present testimony on the subject of Vietnam. The purpose of your hearings is history, but with respect to Vietnam, the past and the present are irrevocably interlocked. The mind-numbing sameness of the war and the overwhelming fact that this war is not yet history, compel us to be contemporary historians with all the attendant risks.

My testimony will deal with (1) the past, specifically the causes of U.S. involvement in the war, and (2) the present, specifically the lessons of the past that bear on today.

Wars are supposed to tell us about ourselves. Are we a wise and just nation? Or are we foolish and aggressive? Merciless or humane? Well led or mislead? Vital or decadent? Hopeful or hopeless? Nations in war and after war, win or lose, try to scratch away at the paste or glue or traditions or values that held their societies together and see of what they are made. It is arguable whether a society should indulge in such self-scrutiny. Societies are, as Edmund Burke wrote, "delicate, intricate wholes" that are more easily damaged than improved when subjected to the glare of Grand Inquisitors.

But in the case of our own society and the war in Vietnam, too many people are seeking answers and are entitled to them, and many are only too eager to fill in the blanks. The families and friends of those who were killed and wounded will want to know whether it was worth it after all? Intellectuals will want to know "why Vietnam"? Men seeking and holding political office will demand to know who was responsible? The answers to these questions will themselves become political facts and forces, shaping the United States role in the world and our lives at home for years to come.

I. CAUSES OF THE WAR: THE RANGE OF EXPLANATIONS

Central to this inquiry is the issue of causes of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. I have found eight discernible explanations advanced in the Vietnam literature. Different authors combine these explanations in various ways, but I will keep them separate for the purpose of analysis. I will, then, sketch by own position.

1. The arrogance of power

This view holds that a driving force in American envelopment in Vietnam was the fact that we were a nation of enormous power and like comparable nations in history, we would seek to use this power at every opportunity. To have power is to want to employ it, is to be corrupted by it. The arrogance derives from the belief that to have power is to be able to do anything. Power invokes right and justifies itself. Vietnam was there, a challenge to this power and an opportunity for its exercise, and no task was beyond accomplishment.

There can be no doubt about this strain in the behavior of other great powers and in the American character. But this is not a universal law. Great powers, and especially the United States have demonstrated self-restraint. The arrogance of power, I think, had more to do with our persisting in the war than with our initial involvement. It always was difficult for our leaders back in Washington and for operatives in the field to believe that American resources and ingenuity could not devise some way to overcome the adversary.

2. Bureaucratic politics

There are two, not mutually exclusive, approaches within this view. One has it that national security bureaucrats (the professionals who make up the military services, civilian Defense, AID, State, and the CIA) are afflicted with the curse of machismo, the need to assert and prove manhood and toughness. Career advancement and acceptability within the bureaucracy depended on showing that you were not afraid to propose the use of force. The other approach has it that bureaucrats purposefully misled their superiors about the situation in Vietnam and carefully constructed policy alternatives so as to circumscribe their superiors, those forcing further involvement in Vietnam.

The machismo phenomenon is not unknown in the bureaucracy. It was difficult, if not damaging, to careers to appear conciliatory or "soft". Similarly, the constriction of options is a well-known bureaucratic device. But, I think, these approaches unduly emphasize the degree to which the President and his immediate advisers were trapped by the bureaucrats. The President was always in a position to ask for new options or to exclude certain others. The role of the bureaucracy was much more central to shaping the programs or the means used to fight the war than the key decisions to make the commitments in the first place.

3. Domestic politics

This view is quite complicated, and authors argue their case on several different levels. The variants are if you were responsible for losing Vietnam to communism, you would: (a) lose the next election and lose the White House in particular; (b) jeopardize your domestic legislative program, your influence in general, by having to defend yourself constantly against political attack; (c) invite the return of a McCarthyite right-wing reaction; and (d) risk undermining domestic support for a continuing U.S. role abroad, in turn, risking dangerous probes by Russia and China.

There can be no doubt, despite the lack of supporting evidence in the Pentagon Papers, about the importance of domestic political considerations in both the initial commitment to and the subsequent increase in our Vietnam involvement. Officials are reluctant, for obvious reasons, to put these considerations down in writing, and scholars therefore learn too little about them. It should also be noted that domestic political factors played a key part in shaping the manner in which the war was fought—no reserve call-ups, certain limitations on bombing targetting, paying for the war, and the like.

4. Imperialism

This explanation is a varient of the domestic politics explanation. Proponents of this view argue that special interest groups maneuvered the United States into the war. Their goal was to capture export markets and natural resources at public expense for private economic gain.

The evidence put forward to support this "devil theory" has not been persuasive. Certain groups do gain economically from wars, but their power to drive our political system into war tends to be exaggerated and over-dramatized.

5. Men making hard choices pragmatically

This is the view that our leaders over the years were not men who were inspired by any particular ideology, but were pragmatists weighing the evidence and looking at each problem on its merits. According to this perspective, our leaders knew they were facing tough choices, and their decisions always were close ones. But having decided 51 to 49 to go ahead, they tried to sell and implement their policies one hundred percent.

This view cannot be dismissed out-of-hand. Most of our leaders, and especially our Presidents, occupied centrist political positions. But Vietnam is a case, I believe, where practical politicians allowed an anti-communist world view to get the best of them.

6. Balance of power politics

Intimately related to the pragmatic explanations is the conception which often accompanies pragmatism—the desire to maintain some perceived balance-of-power among nations. The principal considerations in pursuing this goal were: seeing that "the illegal use of force" is not allowed to succeed, honoring commitments, and keeping credibility with allies and potential adversaries. The underlying judgment was that failure to stop aggression in one place would tempt others to aggress in ever more dangerous places.

These represent the words and arguments most commonly and persuasively used in the executive branch, the Congress, and elsewhere. They seemed commonsensical and prudential. Most Americans were prepared to stretch their meaning to Vietnam. No doubt many believed these arguments on their own merits, but in most cases, I think, the broader tenet of anti-communism made them convincing.

7. *The slippery slope*

Tied to the pragmatic approach, the conception of balance of power and the arrogance of power, is the explanation which holds that United States involvement in Vietnam is the story of the slippery slope. According to this view, Vietnam was not always critical to U.S. national security; it became so over the years as each succeeding administration piled commitment on commitment. Each administration sort of slid further into the Vietnam quagmire, not really understanding the depth of the problems in Vietnam and convinced that it could win. The catchwords of this view are optimism and inadvertence.

While this explanation undoubtedly fits certain individuals and certain periods of time, it is, by itself, a fundamental distortion of the Vietnam experience. From the Korean War, stated American objectives for Vietnam were continuously high and absolute. U.S. involvement, not U.S. objectives, increased over time. Moreover, to scrutinize the range of official public statements and the private memos as revealed in the Pentagon Papers makes it difficult to argue that our leaders were deceived by the enormity of the Vietnam task before them. It was not necessary for our leaders to believe they were going to win. It was sufficient for them to believe that they could not afford to lose Vietnam to communism.

8. *Anti-Communism*

The analysts who offer this explanation hold that anti-communism was the central and all-pervasive fact of U.S. foreign policy from at least 1947 until the end of the sixties. After World War II, an ideology whose very existence seemed to threaten basic American values had combined with the national force of first Russia and then China. This combination of ideology and power brought our leaders to see the world in "we-they" terms and to insist that peace was indivisible. Going well beyond balance of power considerations, every piece of territory became critical, and every beseiged nation, a potential domino. Communism came to be seen as an infection to be quarantined rather than a force to be judiciously and appropriately balanced. Vietnam, in particular, became the cockpit of confrontation between the "Free World" and Totalitarianism; it was where the action was for 20 years.

In my opinion, simple anti-communism was the principal reason for United States involvement in Vietnam. It is not the whole story, but it is the biggest part.

As of this point in my own research, I advance three propositions to explain why, how, and with what expectations the United States became involved in the Vietnam war.

First, U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not mainly or mostly a story of step by step, inadvertent descent into unforeseen quicksand. It is primarily a story of why U.S. leaders considered that it was vital not to lose Vietnam by force to Communism. Our leaders believed Vietnam to be vital not for itself, but for what they thought its "loss" would mean internationally and domestically. Previous involvement made further involvement more unavoidable, and, to this extent, commitments were inherited. But judgments of Vietnam's "vitalness"—beginning with the Korean War—were sufficient in themselves to set the course for escalation.

Second, our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory in Vietnam. They were doing only what they thought was minimally necessary at each stage to keep Indochina, and later South Vietnam, out of Communist hands. This forced our Presidents to be brakemen, to do less than those who were urging military victory and to reject proposals for disengagement. It also meant that our Presidents wanted a negotiated settlement without fully realizing (though realizing more than their critics) that a civil war cannot be ended by political compromise.

Third, our Presidents and most of their lieutenants were not deluded by optimistic reports of progress and did not proceed on the basis of wishful thinking about winning a military victory in South Vietnam. They recognized that the steps they were taking were not adequate to win the war and that unless Hanoi relented, they would have to do more and more. Their strategy was to persevere in hope that their will to continue— if not the practical effects of their actions—would cause the Communists to relent.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record of my testimony the article in which I develop these propositions.

II. LESSONS LEARNED

President Nixon may no longer be devoted to simple anti-communism as the main reason for pursuing the Vietnam war. His administration has done much to rid the public debate of the old cold war cliches. The President's speech of April 30, however, in which he frequently invoked the "communist" threat does raise suspicions about his change of thinking. Nevertheless, President Nixon has, for the most part, justified continuation of the war along two lines: first, that "the right way out of Vietnam is crucial to our changing role in the world, and the peace in the world"; and second that losing would produce a "nightmare of recrimination" at home, undermining political support for U.S. interests abroad.

From my vantage point, the central task before this Committee is to evaluate the President's rationales on their merits, of course, but also against the lessons we should have learned from twenty-five years of war in Vietnam.

Lesson one concerns the Saigon Government and military forces. They always get better, but they never get good enough. The current North Vietnamese offensive, whatever the immediate results, shows once again that the Saigon forces cannot defend themselves without massive American assistance. Regardless of what can be said about the improvement and bravery of the Saigon forces, one simple fact obscures all the rest—a North Vietnamese force of some 100,000 men is fighting and beating a 1 million plus South Vietnamese army backed up by about 800 tactical air sorties per day. Something is wrong somewhere. Something always has been wrong.

The lesson is that military power without political cohesiveness and support is an empty shell. Americans can have great sympathy for the many non-communist South Vietnamese who do not want to be ruled by the communists. Yet, these groups never have been able to submerge their own difference into a single, unified purpose and gather support from the peasant masses. Most recently, the Thieu regime has gained in stability but not in legitimacy. Without this legitimacy, and the quest for it seems never-ending, the Saigon regime perpetually will require American support.

Lesson two concerns the Hanoi Government. While annual hints and predictions have it that the North Vietnamese are about to expire, their will to fight seems undiminished and they keep coming back. It is not necessary to glorify Hanoi to face this fact. The brutality of Hanoi's methods of warfare have matched, if not exceeded, Saigon's. And certainly, Hanoi has received massive doses of aid from the Soviet Union and China—although only a fraction of the aid the United States has given to Saigon. But something has gone right for them somewhere.

The lesson is, I believe, that time and determination are on the side of the elemental tide of nationalism, and that the leadership in Hanoi always has symbolized this basic political force. To be sure, the efficiency. But efficient authoritarianism is not the principal reason for Hanoi's success. In the past, dictatorial regimes have fallen under far less pressure than has been absorbed by Hanoi. The only satisfactory explanation is that at least for its own people and for a substantial minority in South Vietnam, Hanoi still stands for nationalism and independence.

Lesson three comes back to the nature of the war itself. The war in Vietnam was and is a civil war and a war for national independence. The central question of who shall rule Vietnam would have been settled on just these terms long ago had it not been for the intervention of outside powers. Whenever one Vietnamese side or the other in this conflict was in danger of losing, an outside power would step in to redress the balance. When France and the United States increased their efforts, Russia and China would follow suit.

The lesson, I think, is that the war never will end as long as outside powers keep it going. This goes for Russia and China as well as the United States. But the United States has a particular responsibility for prolonging this war. There can be little doubt who would have won in 1945 or 1954 or 1965 had the United States restricted its role or stayed out. There is, I feel, little doubt who would win today. This, in turn, gives the United States an additional responsibility—standing ready to provide asylum to all those South Vietnamese who believe their lives would be endangered by a North Vietnamese victory. But before this point is reached, we must face the tragic and brutal probability that more Vietnamese will die by the continuation of the present war than will die in a bloodletting following its conclusion.

We can attribute great principles to our involvement in Vietnam—stopping communism, preventing falling dominoes, seeing that aggression does not succeed, protecting the fabric of U.S. foreign policy at home and abroad. But these principles can mean only continuing death to the Vietnamese. In the end, the struggle will be resolved, as it began, by the Vietnamese themselves.

A fourth lesson, related to the others, concerns bombing. In April 1954, President Eisenhower, backed by all the military chiefs except the Chairman, decided that U.S. bombing could neither save Dienbienphu nor turn the tide of battle against the Vietminh nor make the Vietminh cease and desist. Over the years, our leaders have lost sight of the basic soundness of this decision. Bombing has not broken Hanoi's will, and there is no sign that it could. Bombing does impose certain limitations on the movement of men and supplies, but not to low enough levels to prevent Hanoi's carrying out its strategy. Tactical bombing is supposed to be quite effective against conventional force operations and it can be decisive in paricular battles, but it has not prevented Hanoi in the last months from bringing down tanks, trucks, and heavy artillery into the South, and it cannot ultimately do the job of ground forces.

The lesson is that more bombing will bring neither victory nor peace. More bombing in North Vietnam would, in time, somewhat curtail Hanoi's offensive in the South, but at the risk of once again setting back United States relations with Russia and China and at the price of countless civilian lives. More bombing in South Vietnam will impede Hanoi's offensive at the expense of killing and making refugees out of hundreds of thousands of peasants. What, then, is the purpose of such senseless slaughter?

A fifth lesson concerns domestic dissent. Many people who participated in the efforts of the last seven years to change our policy say that they think they were wasting their time. I do not agree. Their opposition, and the potential threat of greater public opposition, was a constant factor in the deliberations of American policy-makers during the last two Administrations.

The lesson is that dissenters may not have been powerful, but they were not powerless. Responsible criticism, often centered in these chambers, played an important and honorable role in preventing worse outrages from taking place

A sixth and final lesson stemming from the others concerns dealing with dilemmas and ending the war. Given the constant goal of a noncommunist South Vietnam since the Korean War, Vietnam has presented the United States with a dilemma. At first, our leaders realized that there was no chance of defeating the Vietminh unless France granted independence to Vietnam, but that if France granted independence, she would not remain and fight the war. So, we could not win with France and we could not win without her. Then, our leaders recognized that Diem was hopelessly losing the support of the people, but at the same time, that he represented the only hope of future political stability. So, we could not win with Diem and we could not win without him. Later, our leaders came to the view that the Saigon regime could not survive without massive U.S. involvement, and that the North Vietnamese effort seemed able to survive despite U.S. efforts. So again, the war could not be won with the United States nor without the United States.

In full knowledge of these dilemmas, our leaders persisted nevertheless. Each successor group of leaders thought that they might just succeed where their predecessors had failed—or at least, that they would prevent defeat. Our leaders plowed on for the range of reasons discussed earlier in this paper. For many years (until the American people saw the policy was not working and began doubting the word of their elected officials), these reasons found a generous reception. It is not difficult to understand why proposals for U.S. disengagement fell on deaf ears. But this is a different time, and we have, I think, new and more sensible lenses through which to view the war.

The old rationales about nations falling like dominoes to communism and our own nation falling into the pit of McCarthyism no longer can stand close scrutiny. Extremists looking for scapegoats will try to make trouble, but every indication is that the American people want out of this war. Nor should U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam presage a return to popular isolationism. If continuing commitments elsewhere in the world are honestly explained and seem reasonable to the American people, they have a proven record of being willing to bear international burdens. As for the fate of Vietnam being central to the credibility and successes of all U.S. foreign policy, as President Nixon has suggested so often, this is an improbable proposition. What wisdom is there that causes President Nixon to link the "dignity of the office of the Presidency" to the fate of the Saigon forces? Who still believes that any of our allies expect us to fight indefinitely? How many of our allies were worried enough about the fate of

Vietnam to make a meaningful contribution to its defense? If anything, the domino theory may now be true in reverse. That is, if we continue the war, this act alone might jeopardize the growing pursuit of common interests between Washington and Peking and Moscow and might undermine American political support for a continuing U.S. security role in the world.

It would be better to find some magic diplomatic formula that could reconcile all parties in a free and democratic process. But the pursuit of such a magic formula in the Vietnam civil war is a dangerous illusion. No civil war has been settled by political compromise. Even President Nixon's generous terms when measured by the standard of nation-to-nation negotiations cannot resolve the hatreds and stakes of a civil war. Civil warring parties will not risk their lives and their life-long aspirations in the throw of some electoral dice. Elections require trust and a common loyalty. These are precisely the ingredients which are missing in a civil war.

At this point in history, the issue of morality as between the Hanoi and Saigon regimes is not a clear-cut matter. The refugees are fleeing South, not North. But when they get South, they develop no loyalty to Saigon. It is not easy now to declaim whether Hanoi or Saigon is right about who should rule South Vietnam. But I do believe that the United States is not the keeper of Vietnamese morality and that it is wrong for the United States to perpetuate this war.

The Pentagon Papers, the matter specifically before this Committee, tell the story of how the executive branch of our government perpetuated the Vietnam war. They do not tell us about the role of the Congress, the news media, the political climate in our country and our values, or the reactions of other nations. Nor do the Pentagon Papers answer the question of what kind of nation are we—the question which I posed at the beginning of this presentation. We may well have this answer in the coming weeks.

The only way, in my judgment, to resolve the Vietnam dilemma is for the United States to set a date certain for the complete withdrawal of our land, sea, and air forces in return for our prisoners of war. We must also stand ready to provide refuge for those desiring to leave South Vietnam. This is not a good alternative. There are costs that we cannot run away from. But it is better than persisting in an endless, hopeless, and tragic war.

The Chairman. Thank you, Dr. Gelb. I can assure you it is only a coincidence that you were scheduled for this very morning, but I think what you have had to say could not have been more appropriate to the circumstances with which we are confronted today.

We have Professor Thomson who has arrived. I think perhaps so that we can question both of you, would you sit where you are, Dr. Gelb, and, Mr. Thomson, would you come up and give your statement? Then we will proceed to questions.

While he is settling down, Dr. Gelb, there is one question that keeps recurring there: You assert so positively, and I agree, that this is a civil war. That is a basic assumption that the Government of the United States has never accepted. They have always rejected the idea that this is a civil war. I believe we will pursue that later.

Professor Thomson, we are very glad to have you this morning.

STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR JAMES C. THOMSON, JR., HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Mr. Thomson. Mr. Chairman, I am very glad to be here. I think you will find a certain overlap between my thoughts and those of my friend and colleague, Mr. Gelb.

I am very grateful to testify here before your distinguished committee, sir, on the origins and the lessons of the Indochina war. I must add, however, that I am frankly astounded to be doing so while that war continues in yet a new phase of escalated American involvement in this fifth month of the year 1972. Had I been told, as a State Department official 10 years ago or as a National Security Council staff member 7 years ago, that the United States would still be a Vietnam war participant in 1972, I would have been utterly incredulous. Most of my colleagues would have been equally disbelieving.

All of us—policymakers, legislators, and citizens alike— have been exposed by now to more data, documents, exhortations, and preachments about this war than on any other unresolved crisis in our history. Let me try, therefore, to summarize very briefly my own views on the matter.

SUMMARY OF WITNESS' VIEWS ON U.S. INVOLVEMENT

One, American participation in Vietnam hostilities is a step that could have and should have been avoided. Once begun, it should and could have been ended at several junctures. Today, this week, is only the most recent of such junctures.

Two, the Vietnam region, an Asian colonial appendage, was a region governed so badly by its French colonial rulers from the late 19th century through 1940 that Vietnamese nationalism and Vietnamese communism largely coalesced during the struggle against first France, then Japan, and then France again. As a result of such coalescence, such fusion, the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution for independence and nationhood had largely fallen under the control of long-indigenous Vietnamese Communists by the mid- and late-1940's. Ho Chi Minh was the George Washington of Vietnam, whatever we may think of his politics, though, like George Washington, he had to struggle against loyalist pro-European elements within the bureaucracy, army and intelligentsia.

Three, Vietnam was, further a colonial region in which the French so delayed and bungled the opportunities for post-1945 graceful withdrawal that they were eventually forced out by Ho Chi Minh and General Giap in 1954 under fairly ignominious circumstances. Moreover—a sadly important point for our nation—they were forced out at a time when the United States had been suddenly traumatized by the cold war in Europe, the so-called loss of China and then the Korean war.

A fourth point: Against this backdrop, America's progressive involvement went through several very separate stages. First Washington acquiesced in the French return to Indochina and then financed the French war there largely for reasons that had nothing at all to do with Asia, but, rather, as Mr. Acheson and others have revealed, as the price required to win French participation in West European defense arrangements. By 1951 that price totaled nearly $4 billion. But with the Communist victory in China, Washington developed a second rationale, namely, resistance to what was wrongly perceived as monolithic international communism—Peking and Hanoi as mere creations and puppets of Moscow. Such a false perception was intensified by the outbreak of the Korean war and China's eventual entry into that war as General MacArthur marched to the Yalu River and the Chinese frontier. From this point on, Washington saw Chinese-directed communism spilling out all over Asia, and Vietnam became merely one break in the dike.

A fifth point: Hence, Washington's further blunder of disassociating the United States from the 1954 Geneva Accords and gradually moving in to replace the French and help upset those accords, all on the false assumption of communism's monolithic nature and China's expansionist aims. We took such moves despite the patently special nature and force of Vietnamese national communism, a gradually escalating commitment on our part to an historical, political, and logistical swamp that any great power should have known enough to avoid.

A sixth general point: Hence, further, the compounding of these initial blunders through escalatory intervention by two Administrations in an unfinished Vietnamese civil war from 1961 onward, while pretending all along that it was not a civil war. In conjunction with these moves, policymakers sought to explain such involvement to the American people by developing a public description of what was at stake in Vietnam that bore little relevance to reality but created, de facto, a new reality through what one might call rhetorical escalation; in other words, Vietnam became of supreme importance largely because we said it was of supreme importance.

A final point: None of this. I would add, was the result of criminal or malevolent men, either in Washington or necessarily in Southeast Asia. Most of it was the result of ignorance, shortsightedness, fear, frustration, and fatigue, and the like, though ignorance, shortsightedness, fear, frustration, and fatigue can, in fact, lead to and have lead to criminal consequences.

REJOINDER OF SUFFERING IF UNITED STATES HAD NOT INTERVENED

Let me deal at once with one obvious rejoinder to the preceding capsulized account. Vietnam obviously confronted American policymakers with a situation where, if Washington had not intervened, a good many innocent anti-Communists would have suffered in the course of civil war and revolution. But even if it were argued that we should be in the business of rescuing oppressed peoples from their compatriots on a worldwide basis—a dubious proposition, I would suggest—I would say that infinitely more suffering has been inflicted and continues to be inflicted today on people in both Vietnams and in Laos and Cambodia by our intervention than would have occurred if we hadn't intervened. Those who have warned for years of the impending bloodbath must face the grim reality of the daily bloodbath we have imposed on Indochina. Here, indeed, is one of the most striking cases in modern history of a cure far worse than the disease.

REJOINDER OF DOMINO THEORY

As for that other recurrent rejoinder, the so-called domino theory, such simplistic formulations are mainly a cover for sloppy thinking. As anyone who knows that nation's tortured history must see, Vietnam is a special and peculiar mix of ingredients—unique, not general, and certainly not a "test case." What happens there tells us nothing very useful about the future anywhere else. Moreover, the consequences of Communist success there must therefore be examined with special care and precision; and such examination indicates that it would not have ramifications of real significance beyond the three Indochina states already affected, except, of course, for the commonplace of what one might call the "ripple" effect—which is a far cry from the vision of falling dominoes.

I am convinced, however, that dominoism does contain one important kernel of reality; for as I review the record of our Indochina involvement, I detect—as Daniel Ellsberg has put it—one crucial domino, and perhaps the only one, that seems to have obsessed each American President since Mr. Truman, namely, the Administration in power in Washington. By this I mean that each President has sensed a lesson from the Democrats' so-called loss of China in 1949 and their defeat at the polls in 1952, and has concluded that the loss of South Vietnam to Communism will bring about his own Administration's downfall at the next general election.

ALTERNATIVES OFFERED AT EVERY STAGE

One has heard from men in high positions at each stage of this convulsive tragedy that no constructive alternative to escalation was offered or available. The fact of the matter, however, is that at every stage alternatives have been offered, both from inside and outside the Government. All of them were allegedly unpalatable at the time since they all ran the risk of a Communist takeover in South Vietnam. Yet all of them were proved progressively more palatable in retrospect once the opportunity was missed. There were things we could and should have done a year ago, 2 years ago, 3, 5, 10 years ago, that are substantially harder to do today, except perhaps that the American people may at last be learning. They were proposed at the time and they were rejected at each stage because the short-term price of doing them seemed infinitely higher than the short-term price of not doing them and continuing instead on the same course. But the long-term price of not doing them turns out, of course, to be compounded daily and even hourly.

ADMISSION OF ERROR AND FAILURE RECOMMENDED

How, now, can we end the Indochina war?

In my view, the answer is fairly simple: by trying the one thing we have not tried—honesty; specifically, by having the greatness to admit national error, the intelligence to act on that admission, and the compassion to do it quickly.

To put the matter bluntly, in some wars there is simply no substitute for failure. It is high time to face the long evident truth that our South Vietnamese clients are the losing faction of a revolutionary civil war, could not have lasted the past decade without us, and today will not last a week without our constant aerial and naval bombardment of their adversaries and their own people. There may be way-stations, even fairly enduring ones, to the ultimate outcome of Communist domination in the south—for instance, a coalition government. But a cold calculation of Vietnamese interests, as well as ours, should persuade us to acquiesce in that ultimate outcome, if necessary.

What we so desperately have needed is something no President has had the courage to face and to tell the American people—that Vietnam was lost to Vietnamese national communism many years ago by the French, by Americans, but mostly by Vietnamese; that nothing short of perpetual war might retrieve that loss (and at what cost!); that the loss doesn't matter in terms of American security interests and indeed has never mattered; and that an admission of error and failure that brings peace to a shattered region is far from "national humiliation," as Mr. Nixon once called it, but is, rather, the first step toward national regeneration, an act of true national courage.

What would be the results of such a message from the Presidency?

WARNINGS OF RIGHTWING BACKLASH AND NEOISOLATIONISM

We have been warned for as long as I served in government and now by those in the present administration, of the rightwing backlash, the new loss-of-China witch hunt that would follow such a move. We have been warned of the headlong flight into isolationism or neoisolationism that would ensure. Are these real dangers?

The first, a backlash, seems probable in some form in the wake of virtually any outcome short of victory. It is simply a fact of life, the inescapable price open societies must pay for righting a major and prolonged wrong. But it is also very clearly containable in the present instance, thanks largely to the overwhelming agenda of things to be done at home and elsewhere in the world, thanks also to the media that have brought this war's insanity into every livingroom, thanks, hopefully, as well, to effective executive leadership.

As for the second danger, isolationism, it seems to me highly improbable. We have been overinvested, overcommitted, overextended in parts of the world, and particularly in East Asia, over the past 20 years; indeed, the so-called Nixon doctrine wisely acknowledges that fact. But disinvestment in one area and pullback in Asia cannot in this day and age mean anything like what those who grew up in the 1920's and 1930's so much fear. We are simply too globally involved—through communications, technology, trade, travel, economic investment, diplomacy and, of course, our special status as a nuclear power—to return to anything resembling the dream of Fortress America.

WHAT OFFERED FORMULA CAN DO

This is not to suggest that the formula I offer here will have easy consequences, for there is, of course, no easy way out of our present Southeast Asian crisis. But it can, under the right leadership, move us gradually toward something new and something precious—a tempering of our national grandiosity, an end to our special sense of benevolence as a nation, an erosion of the ugly qualities that accompany such overweaning confidence, including excessive fear of loss or failure. It can lead, in time, toward a new national maturity, a sense that we are only one of many and that we cannot transform the world by ourselves.

And it can lead in the process, to a new degree of candor in our government's relations with its own citizens and a new degree of respect by the citizens for their government. We can thereby begin to cleanse ourselves of the war's most debilitating poison—collective deception and national self-deception.

CREATING COMMISSION TO REFLECT ON WAR RECOMMENDED

I believe that one great step toward such health, Mr. Chairman, would be the creation of a blue-ribbon, bipartisan national commission to reflect upon this quarter-century tragedy and to distill its lessons for the future. I have in mind the creation by the President or, if necessary, by the Congress, of a national commission on the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Indochina war. Such a proposal is not new, but it does seem to me more imperative than ever that we make every effort to move from recrimination to reflection and understanding. I would hope that such a commission would be given access to all archives pertaining to the war, not merely the Pentagon study but all others as well, and would take testimony from every level of participant. I would suggest that it be given a substantial period of time for its undertaking—perhaps 2 or 3 years—and I would hope that its ultimate fundings might not merely point the finger of guilt, where appropriate, at all levels of the decisionmaking and war-waging process but might also recommend a general amnesty for all—for Presidents, their civilian advisers and their military officials from generals down through the ranks. and also for those whose consciences caused them to choose jail or to flee the country rather than serve in the Vietnam war.

PRESIDENT'S MAY 8 STATEMENT COMPOUNDS TRAGEDY

Mr. Chairman, I listened to President Nixon on the television last night, and I heard tragedy compounded.

Faced with the failure of so-called Vietnamization, the failure of negotiations and the failure of rhetorical and military deterrence, he confronted now the predictable and the very long predicted, a renewal of the Vietnamese revolutionary war under the leadership of North Veitnam's men with a cause, and the impending collapse of will among South Vietnamese who have little or no cause. And what has he done? He has decreed two vital U.S. stakes in Vietnam, the one entirely phony, and the other unachievable. He tells us that our 60,000 residual American troops are threatened—and what better way to resolve the problem, one might ask, than to withdraw them? And he tells us that the 17 million South Vietnamese are in danger of being taken over by communism, a distinct possibility and eventual probability for the past 20 years. Furthermore, he has reelevated this pitiful conflict to superpower and global levels of potential destruction by imposing an undeclared blockade on North Vietnam and by moving into direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. Finally, he does these things, he tells us, because no longer is merely the Presidency at stake, as he had said last month, but our honor is at stake. He asks us, in closing, for "the same support you have always given your President."

Mr. Chairman, the President's path is the path of national insanity. The invocation of national honor over pathetically misjudged stakes has been tried before. The invocation of support for the Presidency has been tried before. The conscious invocation of superpower collision has heretofore been carefully avoided by proud but prudent men. But national honor is not what beleaguered Presidents define it to be; it is greater and more enduring. And blind support for Presidents is at the very taproot of our continuing Indochina calamity. As for conscious invocation of superpower collision, that is a course totally unjustified by the stakes, by the history, and by the issue itself.

TWO ESSENTIAL STEPS TOWARD REAL PEACE

Once again a President has stated the choices falsely. If this President genuinely wants peace, if he genuinely seeks the release of our prisoners, if he is genuinely concerned about our 60,000 remaining troops, and if he genuinely cares about the fate of 17 million South Vietnamese, he must take two long essential steps toward real peace: the first, proposed 6 years ago by the late Robert Kennedy, an offer at long last to agree to the formation of a coalition government in South Vietnam; and the second, proposed repeatedly by members of this Congress, the clear and final setting of a deadline for total withdrawal of all American forces from Indochina.

Only then can the people of Indochina begin to be relieved of the nightmare we have helped inflict upon them; and only then can the people of America emerge from their own far lesser nightmare.

That concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Thomson.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESS

It is a very clear statement of the situation in which we are involved. It is very difficult to know what to do to change the President's present proposals. It is difficult to know where to begin. Much of what both of you gentlemen have said we have discussed. Both of you brought it together in a very concise and lucid manner.

COLLECTIVE INCAPABILITY OF CONFESSING ERROR

It has always puzzled me why a community such as the United States is incapable of a confession of error, whereas, everyone making up that community is not at all reluctant to confess error. It is a psychological problem that completely baffles me.

As scholars, why is that? Can you offer an explanation of why collectively we seem incapable of it?

Mr. THOMSON. I would have to have deeper insight into the American national character to give you an answer to that.

I think as people we are fairly much like other nations, but I think that in our self-image as a nation, among nations, we are not like other nations. We have from the beginning of time, had a sense of our own special mission, our own special benevolence—"a city built upon a hill," as one faction would call it, from the earliest days, or as Jefferson himself said, a "revolution intended for all mankind."

Now, this gets you fairly up-tight in terms of external look and behavior. We have what the Chinese would call an excessive sense of face.

The CHAIRMAN. This isn't peculiar to us. The Chinese had that same thought and still have it; don't they? They were the Middle Kingdom and all the rest were barbarians. It is not peculiar that we think well of ourselves. Nearly all nations, especially powerful nations, have; haven't they?

Mr. Thomson. We are a lot younger and they have been in the business for a longer time.

The Chairman. Mr. Gelb?

Mr. Gelb. Mr. Chairman, I have a slightly different slant on this answer than my colleague, Mr. Thomson.

I think the reason why our leaders have not admitted error on Vietnam is because they think they are right. I don't believe for one moment that President Nixon is being a political opportunist about this war. I think, much more dangerously, he believes in what he is doing. He really sees that the fall of Vietnam will lead to the collapse of U.S. foreign policy abroad, the undermining of political support of that policy at home. When he says that it would be easier for him to announce withdrawal, I think he is showing a recognition of the fact that most Americans want him to withdraw, but he is asserting his own judgment about the "vitalness" of Vietnam against, I think, the will of many Members of Congress and the majority of the American people.

NO CONSULTATION WITH SENATE ABOUT PRESIDENT'S DECISION

The Chairman. It is rather curious. In this instance yesterday, so far as I know, no member of the Senate was consulted in any respect about the president's decision. I can't speak for the House. We were told of it at 8:00 o'clock last night in a very brief statement just prior to his announcement. It is a very unusual way for a country which professes to be a democracy to conduct its affairs.

There is still the puzzle of what to do about it because every evidence that has come to my attention is that the American people feel this ought to be terminated and terminated soon.

PURPOSE OF COMMISSION

Mr. Thomson, you don't mean your idea of a commission that would study 2 or 3 years as a contribution to the ending of the war; do you? It is to overcome the alleged evil effects of the ending of the war, I assume?

Mr. Thomson. That is correct, to try to defuse the issue and to draw lessons from the issue.

The Chairman. It could not contribute——

Mr. Thomson. It could not contribute to an ending of the war—unless the war is still going on 5 years from now, in which case its findings might help. I trust we won't be in that situation.

DIFFICULTY OF ADJUSTING TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chairman. Of course, the occurrences of last night have obviously upset all of us, I suppose, and our ideas of how this committee study was to proceed. It is a little difficult for me to adjust to these new circumstances so quickly. All of us are struggling, including myself, and other members of the Senate. We have had two or three caucuses within the last few days, and there is another one for this afternoon, to consider this very question of what can be done to persuade our administration to move in a different direction. In view of the speech last night, I suppose, I can think of nothing to do.

VALUE OF PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL COUPLED WITH CEASEFIRE

Do either of you gentlemen have any suggestion, under present circumstances, of what might contribute to a significant move? Do you feel there is any value whatever in the proposal, which he seemed to make, of a withdrawal in 4 months coupled with a ceasefire? The ceasefire has always been unacceptable to the Vietnamese. Both of you have studied this matter at great length.

It has been my understanding, in view of their experience, particularly in 1954 at Geneva, that they will not accept a military ceasefire and will not stop the military activities prior to a political agreement on the future of Vietnam.

Do you agree with that or not, or would you discuss that?

Mr. GELB. That accords with my judgment, Mr. Chairman.

I think every indication we have from the past is that the leaders in Hanoi regard a ceasefire as an indication that they have achieved their goals rather than as a means of achieving their goals. There are several reasons which they have presented for opposition to a ceasefire. One is that in the area of a ceasefire where Saigon forces have control, their cadres, their supporters, would come under grave threat from the Saigon Government.

Second, they don't want to lose the military initiative that comes from an offensive. And, finally, and most importantly in the current context, from their point of view they see Saigon forces as unraveling; and to declare or accept a ceasefire at this point in time would run against their military interests in that regard.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CONGRESS BETWEEN NOW AND ELECTION

You made another point, Mr. Chairman, that I would like briefly to respond to. I am under no illusion that President Nixon would accept the kind of proposals that Jim Thomson and I have been talking about this morning and the members of the Senate have been talking about for years. He wouldn't; he will persist in this course. If there is any chance of ending this before the next election, I think it can only be ended here in the Congress. Congressmen and Senators have for years, in my judgment, hidden behind the President on the Vietnam war. They go along with whatever he was saying and doing. He knew best; he had all of the facts. If it went wrong, it would be his fault. But I think as in many occasions in the past, if the war continues, it will be as much the responsibility of Congressmen and Senators who did not oppose the President as it is the responsibility of the President.

Mr. THOMSON. I would heartily endorse what Mr. Gelb just said, Mr. Chairman. The President asked us last night to support the President. I think a higher obligation is to support the well-being of the country, and here the people can help, but the Congress has the major responsibility between now and election day.

ACCEPTABILITY OF CEASEFIRE TO HANOI SECONDARY

Mr. GELB. One further point on ceasefire, sir: One can't be categorical about what Hanoi will do or will not do. We can't get inside their minds and we know very little about how they operate, what their political processes are. It is possible that if in the course of the next few weeks North Vietnamese forces captured Hue, and Kontum, a ceasefire might be acceptable to them; we can't know. But the thing that concerns me very deeply is that ceasefire is another one of those reeds, another one of those straws, that reasonable men in this country—reasonable men grasp at to say, "Let's go a little longer; let's see if the President can do it this time." I don't think we should hinge our involvement in this war or a lack of interest in this war—our more important interests are elsewhere—on whether or not Hanoi is going to accept a ceasefire. That has got to be a second matter to a definition of where our own interests really lie.

AREA OF APPLICATION OF PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL

Mr. Thomson. I would add that Mr. Nixon's exit after 4 months applies, according to his language, only to Vietnam. He did not say withdrawal of forces from Indochina. He said from Vietnam.

Mr. Gelb. I think he did say from Indochina.

Mr. Thomson. My impression is to the contrary, but we can check it out.

The Chairman. I think it was; he said Vietnam. I don't believe he said Indochina, but we can check that.

FAVORABLE REPLY FROM HANOI NOT LIKELY

Do either of you think that the offer of a military ceasefire and return of our POW's in return for withdrawal of 4 months is likely to be received favorably? You do not think that this is likely to induce a favorable reply from Hanoi?

Mr. Gelb. Judging from their responses to similar kinds of offers in the past, I would say no.

POSSIBILITY OF UNITED STATES AND RUSSIAN AGREEMENT

The Chairman. What would be your response to the thought that the speech is a genuine offer to get out in 4 months, if the Russians will intercede to spare them, we will say, what can be called a defeat or a humiliation? Is there any language and is there anything to suggest to you that there has been some kind of agreement between our Government and the Russians with regard to that?

Mr. Gelb. I would say there is an indication that there is no agreement. At the conclusion of President Nixon's speech last night, he issued a direct warning to the Soviet Union and had Henry Kissinger in his most recent secret trip to Moscow been able to gain Russian acquiescence or passiveness in that policy. I don't think the President would have gone so far out of his way to try to put the Soviet Union in the very box, prior to this summit meeting, which he himself says he would never tolerate. He is asking them to accept the humiliation which he believes that the United States never could.

DISTINCTION CONCERNING STOPPING ACTS OF FORCE AND WITHDRAWAL

The Chairman. For the record, according to the morning paper, his wording was: "and once the internationally supervised ceasefire has begun, we will stop all acts of force throughout Indochina.

"At that time we will proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam within 4 months."

So there is a distinction here. He will stop the acts of force, which, I assume, will include the bombing in Laos and it does not say withdraw our forces. Perhaps it is on the basis that we have no Americans other than the very few advisers in Cambodia and those who supervise or train and look after the army in Laos. I don't know what the current figures are. At one time we had about 1,000 in Laos sort of giving logistic support and direction to the Vang Pao army.

QUESTION OF AGREEMENT OR ACQUIESCENCE FROM MOSCOW ILLUSORY

Mr. Gelb. Mr. Chairman, just one further word on this.

The Chairman. Yes.

Mr. Gelb. Your question about whether President Nixon has any agreement or acquiescence from Moscow in this current war—this is again one of those reeds and straws that one hears bandied about, particularly in this city of Washington, to give the President more time. "He must have something up his sleeve. He must have an ace up there; he is going to play it. Let's not criticize; let's give him a few more months to play that ace." There has never been such an ace before; it is another one of those illusions that make us persist in this war.

ENCOURAGING DISASSOCIATION FROM ACTIONS WITHIN ADMINISTRATION SUGGESTED

Mr. Thomson. Mr. Chairman, you asked what could be done, and we tossed the ball back into the laps of the Congress. I do have one further suggestion.

The Chairman. I was going to come back to that, but go ahead. What is it?

Mr. Thomson. And I propose it with some hesitation, as one who tarried in government for a considerable period of time after escalation in the belief that if one stayed in government one could keep worse things from happening.

My suggestion is that an effort be made, since this feels very much like a one-man decision, to encourage men of conscience within this Administration to depart from the Administration as would happen in any parliamentary government elsewhere, to break ranks, to leave the government, to give their message to the people. I think that with this kind of disassociation of men of conscience from actions of this sort could to some degree act as a brake against a besieged President. It could have other effects as well, and that is why I propose it with some trepidation—also because so many of us did not do it in the past; but perhaps current incumbents should learn from the past.

The Chairman. Isn't that practice much more common in a parliamentary system than in our system? The people in important positions in the parliamentary system are usually men with political power of their own, that is, members of the House of Lords; whereas, it is not true under our Government. The much more important relationship there is that the House of Commons can do something about any government.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO

I was going to come back to what the Congress can do.

We have, as you know, pending the so-called Case-Church amendment which is very similar to the McGovern-Hatfield amendment, and the motion by the Senator from Mississippi to strike that proposal from the pending authorization bill. There has been a great deal of discussion about what to do about it. We passed the Mansfield amendment, to which you referred, and which was wholly ineffective. The President simply dismissed it by saying it is not his policy and he would not be governed by it. So you come down to what the Congress can do. It has passed that amendment which was an expression of policy. The present amendment says cut off the funds after December 31.

There is very little probability, I would say, of that actually being enacted into law even though the Senate passed it. The bill would be vetoed, I assume, if the President really believed what he said last night and it would be a miracle if we could get two-thirds of both Houses for any such proposal as that.

Aren't we really reduced to an appeal to public opinion and thereby as a political leader the President would respond to it in the near future? Even if we passed such an amendment as you mentioned, and it became the law, it would be a long time before it took effect. As a matter of fact, there are so many arms in the pipeline, so much armed strength now deployed in the area that as long as the armed forces obey orders. I don't know what the Congress can do.

We have all thought about this at great length. We have all made speeches; we voted for various restrictions. I proposed, and there was enacted, a restriction upon the use of foreign troops in Laos. They have evaded that. By calling them volunteers and by semantic trickery, the restrictions are evaded. They can invent new names for bombing; they call it protective reaction strikes as if they were something different. It is a great dilemma to the Congress, although, I am bound to say that the Congress as a whole has not yet, except in the Mansfield amendment and that was a most reluctant compromise in conference, evidenced a clear majority directly contrary to this or the preceding President's views. In most of the contests of strength and votes we have had, those of us who opposed the war have been on the losing side by a few votes. We have never had a clear majority except in the Mansfield amendment which is only an expression of policy.

I would like to know what do you think the Congress can do? What do you recommend that the Congress do?

Mr. Gelb. I would say pass Church-Case. I would expect in the case the Congress did, the President would veto the bill in which case I would again suspect that your judgment is right that it would be nearly impossible to get the two-thirds to override. But I think that act by the Congress, Congress' expression of its own majority will, would be an important political force in the country and would bring the issue of ending the war down to the next Presidential election. I would hate to see it go on that long. There is no need for it. But if that is the case, then I think the central issue of that next election must be whether or not the United States will set a date certain for getting out of Vietnam, and that will be the public's decision.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that your view?

Mr. THOMSON. I would certainly endorse what Mr. Gelb says. You do not stop the killing in the war, as the President put it last night, by cutting off arms to only one side. If you genuinely want to stop the killing, you cut off arms to both sides, and that involves cutting off appropriations on this side if the President himself will not cease the pipeline flow.

That is a kind of symmetry that makes sense, although obviously the President would not buy it. It strikes me that if, as you say, Mr. Chairman, public opinion needs to be brought to bear on this matter, public opinion can and should be expressed through the Congress in enacting such legislation with a degree of urgency that never existed prior to last night.

The CHAIRMAN. That is the only vehicle, of course, that we have immediately before us, which is the Case-Church amendment, and whether or not it would be used, I do not know.

EFFECT OF PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON PROSPECTS FOR MOSCOW MEETING

What would your judgment be as to the effect of the statement last night upon the prospects for the meeting in Moscow to proceed on schedule?

Mr. GELB. We are involved in a guessing game here, perhaps, with less, perhaps with as much knowledge, as the Administration, but one calculation, I think, that is important, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Soviet Union, to mount such force in the Vietnam theater of operations to challenge the quarantine. If that judgment is correct, the Soviet Union will then have to think of other ways in which it can compensate for this act in order not to put itself in a position of weakness before the summit, a position of weakness which President Nixon himself says he cannot tolerate.

I doubt that the Soviet Union would stir up crises in the Middle East and Berlin, but I would not be surprised if there were a battle raging in the Kremlin now to call off the summit meeting.

You remember, Mr. Chairman, that back in 1968 when the Soviet Union had invaded Czechoslovakia we had arms control talks scheduled with them. We called those arms control talks off. It is an interesting precedent.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have a comment on that, Mr. Thomson?

Mr. THOMSON. I would be very surprised if the summit meeting took place. I think one would have to recalculate the Soviet Union's worldwide outlook and interests. I think it could only take place if there were a tit-for-tat expression on their part between now and the time of the summit, which is not a pleasant phenomenon to look forward to.

EFFECT OF ANNOUNCED PROGRAM ON SUPPLIES TO NORTH VIETNAM

The CHAIRMAN. Are either of you gentlemen familiar with the problem of logistics and supplies? Do you think the announced program will be effective in preventing substantial supplies getting into North Vietnam from either China or Russia? Are there any alternative ways? What do you think about it?

Mr. Gelb. From my past experience I can make some generalizations about it, but they will lack the certain specificity and currency obviously.

I would guess that a quarantine not only of Haiphong but also of all dozen or so major and relatively large ports on the North Vietnam east coast could be pretty well effective. It would be difficult to get boats of any size, ships of any size, through that quarantine.

The President also announced—that does not mean some cannot get through, in smaller craft—the President also announced that he has authorized the bombing of rail links from China.

Now, on the basis of studies that were done in the Pentagon in the past, it was estimated that even if you bombed those links you would only reduce through-put from China into North Vietnam by about 50 percent. I have no independent judgment on that. I am just repeating. That means that if an air strike against a railway is effective, it only takes the equivalent of several hours to fully repair or to repair that rail link sufficiently to allow trains to proceed on it the next night.

There will be, of course—there are, of course, roads and trucks and there are, of course, men and their backs, and the North Vietnamese have carried on under more adverse circumstances than the situation they are now facing.

It is very doubtful, in my untutored judgment, that this quarantine can have an effect on the battles immediately in progress in South Vietnam; how much of an effect the whole campaign that President Nixon has authorized will have in the coming months remains to be seen. But I doubt very much that it will be sufficient to get North Vietnam to drop its aspirations in this war.

The Chairman. Do you have any comment on that point?

Mr. Thomson. No; that is not an area with which I am familiar.

SOVIET POWER TO PERSUADE NORTH VIETNAM

The Chairman. The implied assumption behind this policy of blockade would seem to be that the Soviets have the power to persuade North Vietnam to relent or to behave. From your study of the past and the Pentagon papers, what do you think of that? Is there any historical evidence that North Vietnam can be controlled by advice from Moscow?

Mr. Gelb. I don't think there is evidence that they can be controlled by Moscow. I think we have learned something ourselves of about how difficult it is to control client states and we have often found ourselves in the position of the tail wagging the dog. But it is true, so far as we know, that at the 1954 Geneva conference and again in the Geneva conference on Laos in 1962, that the Soviet Union and China did play some part in getting Hanoi to back off. Whether they could do the same now, your guess is as good as mine.

The Chairman. There is the further, very difficult question of whether they would be inclined to use their influence even if they had it. Do you see anything in this proposal that would incline the Russians to use whatever influence they had to accept a cease-fire?

Mr. Gelb. If humiliation is the way to get the Soviet Union to twist Hanoi's arms, then President Nixon's proposals will be successful.

Mr. THOMSON. It does strike me, Mr. Chairman, that the North Vietnamese have demonstrated for 25 years, going on 28, their determination to go on with their unfinished revolution and unresolved civil war, national unification and the like, through thick and thin, periodically bending very slightly as they did at the Geneva and Laos conferences. And because of their bending at the 1954 Geneva Conference, I might add, when they settled for half a loaf with the expectation of receiving the other half 2 years later, because of their experience with that move, and its unfortunate consequences from their vantage point, I think they are much less prone to be pushed around by their allies any more than they are pushed around by their adversaries. These are very determined people with a strong sense of mission and they have proved their determination and their sense of mission for a quarter of a century.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CHINESE WOULD INTERVENE

The CHAIRMAN. Do you foresee, Mr. Thomson, any conditions under which the Chinese would intervene in the war?

Mr. THOMSON. It was my experience in government, and I see no reason to modify our position then, that the one tripwire that would bring China into a war in which it did not want to intervene, where its presence was not desired by its ally, would be any clear and present threat to the regime in North Vietnam. In other words, any sign of an effort to overthrow and displace that basically friendly regime by a hostile force on China's borders. So China would come in only to protect Chinese frontiers and security.

EFFECT OF FALL OF KONTUM AND HUE

The CHAIRMAN. One last question before I call on my colleagues: What would you foresee being the result of the fall of Kontum and Hue? Do you think that would have a very significant effect upon the morale and spirit of the South Vietnamese armies?

Mr. THOMSON. I myself would think the answer was yes. Reports out of Saigon indicate that the unfreezing of Vietnamese politics, which have been frozen solid by the heavy American presence, plus the lid of the Thieu regime, would take place as it becomes more clear that the Thieu regime is in trouble.

There are elements in South Vietnam, as we have always known, that are neutralist, anti-Thieu, pro-Communist and the like, many different kinds of tendencies that have had to remain very silent during these years of deep freeze. As they begin to see the wind blowing in a different direction, they might well emerge and you might even get some restlessness within the armed forces of South Vietnam itself toward the top.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any comment on that before I pass to my colleagues?

Mr. GELB. President Thieu himself has said that Hue and Kontum are of critical importance to the political and military viability of his country.

DIFFERENCE IN NEGOTIATIONS IF GENERAL MINH REPLACED PRESIDENT THIEU

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think if he were replaced by General Minh, it would make any difference?

Mr. GELB. Make any difference in negotiations?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. GELB. Quite possibly. The North Vietnamese, as you know, have insisted, so far as we know publicly, on the removal only of President Thieu prior to the election process. If they are serious about that, the exchange of power from Thieu to Minh could be a removal of a stumbling block.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Muskie?

Senator MUSKIE. I assume a lot of ground has already been covered this morning.

The CHAIRMAN. They were very excellent statements, I must say.

Senator MUSKIE. There are certain key questions I would like to ask, and I apologize if they duplicate ground already covered.

RUSSIAN OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE

First of all, what do you see as the Russians' option in response to the President's initiative?

Mr. GELB. Well, I can see a Russian President Nixon getting up and saying he has three options: immediate unilateral humiliating retreat on the one hand, an all-out nuclear war on the other hand, and the third course of persisting in cold war relations, dropping the summit meeting and going back to where we were, as President Nixon so aptly put it, to the dark ages.

Senator MUSKIE. With respect to the immediate military or naval problem that the Russians now face—the mining—what do you see as the possible tactical options that the Russians have?

Mr. GELB. I think they have very few, if any, tactical options in the theater of operations. The United States maintains an enormous conventional force superiority in the area, sea power, air power, and it is doubtful—I could be wrong and I wouldn't want to risk this kind of situation in the first place—but I think it is doubtful that the Soviet Union would try to challenge that military superiority in Vietnam itself.

But if I could expand on that, Senator Muskie, the thing that troubles me about this is that the President of the United States would put everything at risk. I don't know, nor does anyone know, whether it will work or whether it won't work in the sense of effectively shutting off a good deal of supplies coming into the country; but the point is, he is willing to risk a SALT agreement, he is willing to risk growing relations with the Chinese, in pursuit of some interest in Vietnam that I think most Americans have long come to discard as nonsensical and morally wrong.

Senator MUSKIE. I share that view, but I wondered whether there is an alternate route of supply available to the Russians that could effectively supplant this route, if indeed they accept the mining operation and accept the conclusion that they cannot or do not want to challenge that operation to maintain that route of supply. Is an overland route effectively available to them?

Mr. GELB. There still would be four routes available to them, Senator: One, they could bring equipment in by small craft into ports and beaches. Secondly, even if we effectively interdict the rail lines, that, according to studies that have been done in the past, would reduce through-put, rail through-put, only by about 50 percent; the rail lines can be repaired in several hours.

Third, you can bring supplies in through by truck and road.

Fourth, they can carry it on their backs as they have often done in the past.

PRESIDENT'S CONDITIONS FOR LIFTING MINING

Senator MUSKIE. Do you regard the President's conditions for lifting the mining as a softening of his peace terms?

Mr. GELB. It is a variation of his previous proposal. I don't think it is a softening because he did in other parts of his speech refer to his previous proposals as if they were still current in this proposal.

Jim—Mr. Thomson—may have something to add to that.

Mr. THOMSON. I did not detect a major softening. I detected a shuffling; there was the significant suggestion that after 4 months we will withdraw American forces from Vietnam. He does not say Indochina.

Senator MUSKIE. What is the significance of that difference in your judgment?

Mr. THOMSON. Well, it involves the possibility of keeping large forces off the coast, in Laos and Cambodia and, of course, in Thailand, from here to eternity.

Senator MUSKIE. Well, do you regard the lack of withdrawal of all forces coupled with the new language, "all acts of force," as meaning the withdrawal of air power and naval power as well as ground combat forces?

Mr. THOMSON. Subsiding of the violence, of acts of violence, is not the same thing as withdrawing the instruments of violence. I would be untrusting, were I on the other side, as to how long this subsiding would be in order, and what new moves might be taken once one had laid down one's arms, more or less.

Senator MUSKIE. But if the other side were willing to interpret that new language as meaning the possibility of withdrawal of the instruments of air power as well as the use of air power, and the instruments of naval power as well as the use of naval power?

Mr. THOMSON. From all of the region? That would be a step forward, a major——

Senator MUSKIE. Would you regard that as a sufficient additional inducement as to offer some encouragement that the other side might respond positively to the conditions the President laid down last night?

Mr. THOMSON. I find that very hard to guess.

Mr. GELB. The major difference, if it is a difference, is President Nixon's statement that he would end acts of force throughout Indochina. In the past he has limited that to Vietnam. I don't think, in my judgment, that this would be sufficient to get North Vietnam to accept President Nixon's other proposals, which still call for mutual withdrawal of forces, and an electoral process which the North Vietnamese have not chosen to risk in the past, and I doubt would choose to risk in the present.

Senator MUSKIE. Is it fair to summarize your reaction in this way: that the President's initiative last night represents more stick than carrot?

Mr. GELB. Absolutely.

POSSIBILITY OF ACCEPTANCE OF WITHDRAWAL DATE FOR POW RETURN

Senator MUSKIE. What is your assessment of the possibility that North Vietnam, the other side, would accept the proposal of a withdrawal date conditioned only upon the return of prisoners at this stage?

Mr. GELB. Here, again, as I mentioned to Senator Fulbright, we know very little about the workings of the Hanoi leadership; they have publicly said that they would not accept the simple proposal of setting a date and returning our prisoners. They have publicly said that they also want a coalition government excluding President Thieu. They also want a political settlement. I don't know whether that is—that proposal and that statement—is a reaction to our own unacceptable military solutions to the problem or a real reflection of how they would like to see the war negotiated, the end of the war negotiated.

My guess is that there is a difference between making a proposal and accepting a proposal. It might well be difficult for Hanoi's leadership to coalesce around the solution of seeing a date certain and returning our prisoners than it is for them to accept that proposal if we were to offer it. We never have; so we don't know. President Nixon has made it appear in a number of his addresses—he has made that simple proposal, ending of our direct involvement by a certain date in return for prisoners, but he never has. There have always been one, two, or five clinkers to it.

IMPACT OF PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON NEGOTIATIONS

Senator MUSKIE. What effect, if any, would you say the President's decision of last night may have upon the possibility of the other side accepting such a proposal?

In other words, what has been the impact of last night's events upon our negotiating position in Paris, and the negotiating position of the Saigon Government in Paris?

Mr. GELB. There is a study in the Pentagon papers, Senator Muskie, done by the CIA called the "Will to Resist." It was a study done in 1966 and again in 1967. It was the agency's views of the effectiveness of U.S. strategic bombing in North Vietnam. They concluded that not only was bombing ineffective in bringing Hanoi around to accepting the United States' position, but, on the contrary, it increased their will to resist. I see nothing in the events of the last 4 years, 5 years, then, to believe that that judgment would be any different today.

Senator MUSKIE. Is it your conclusion, then, that the events of last night have diminished the prospect for a negotiated settlement and early end to the war?

Mr. GELB. I think it can only prolong the war, sir.

Senator MUSKIE. Is that your view?

Mr. Thomson. That would be my judgment, Senator Muskie. It seems to me that what the President did last night was to put no great additional pressure on Hanoi other than pressures Hanoi has lived with, experienced, or under whose shadow it has persisted. It has put intense new pressures, pressures in terms of a possible humiliation, on the Soviet Union.

We have no reason to believe that the Soviet Union can call the shots in Hanoi, so I see no forward progress and I see a good deal of backward progress in terms of rhetoric and, of course, in terms of an escalated threat of a global nature rather than regional containment of the conflict.

POSSIBILITY OF USING AIR POWER AGAINST SOVIET SHIPPING

Senator Muskie. The President also spoke of his new policy as including the interdiction of all movements, I take it—land, sea, and air supplies—into North Vietnam. Does this mean, in your judgment, an increase in the possibility that we will use air power against Soviet shipping if it should undertake, with the aid of minesweepers, to move across the mine barrier?

Mr. Gelb. Well, the President did say that he would not only mine the various harbors but also would take action to interdict ships that entered Vietnam, North Vietnam territorial waters.

Now, whether he would open fire on them, I don't know, but I don't want to see the United States in a position where we are risking that. I see no conceivable objective in Vietnam that is worth that cost.

Senator Muskie. I agree with that judgment, but Ambassador Rush this morning left open the answer to that question as to what would happen if the Russians were to seek to sweep the mines and move through the minefield with sweeps and presumably with shipping; he left open that question and presumably it is open in your mind as well?

Mr. Gelb. Yes; it is.

Senator Muskie. Would you agree with that, Professor Thomson?

Mr. Thomson. I would agree with that.

The Chairman. Senator Aiken?

GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954

Senator Aiken. I know, Mr. Thomson, you mentioned the Geneva Accords through 1954. Are you sure of that date?

Mr. Thomson. I beg your pardon, sir?

Senator Aiken. The reference to the Geneva Accords in 1954?

Mr. Thomson. Yes, sir.

Senator Aiken. Are you sure of that date?

Mr. Thomson. Yes, sir.

Senator Aiken. What happened in 1962?

Mr. Thomson. In 1962 there was a Laos conference.

Senator Aiken. What is that?

Mr. Thomson. The Geneva agreements on Laos in 1962; there were agreements on Indochina in 1954.

Senator AIKEN. There were references, and you state that the United States would have nothing to do with the Geneva Accords in 1954?

Mr. THOMSON. That is right; Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith was instructed not to sign the accords but to issue a separate United States and South Vietnam statement indicating that we would seek not to upset those accords. We did not sign the agreements.

Mr. GELB. The South Vietnamese Government, in my recollection, did not make any pledge to honor the accords; we did.

Senator MUSKIE. No country signed the accords in 1954?

Mr. GELB. That is technically right; the only thing that was signed was the military arrangements between the French and the Vietminh.

Senator AIKEN. By referring to Geneva Accords of 1954, you are really referring to the Geneva conference which adopted what might have been called the Accords; is that right?

Mr. THOMSON. That is right, sir.

SERVICE PERFORMED BY INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION

Senator AIKEN. I believe the International Control Commission was set up at that time?

Mr. THOMSON. That is correct.

Senator AIKEN. Can you consider that the ICC performed a valuable service?

Mr. THOMSON. At various junctures it performed what we call sort of a windowpane type of service, namely, it was something that might be busted through and it was an observer mission. It certainly did not perform to any degree the service that was intended.

ICC PURPOSE

Senator AIKEN. What was the purpose of the ICC?

Mr. THOMSON. The ICC purpose? The Control Commission was to keep violence from breaking out, to patrol the agreements in the two parts of Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia.

Mr. GELB. It was to effect the military arrangements, Senator, and very interestingly most of the violations of the arrangements reported by the ICC were violations by the South Vietnamese Government, not the North Vietnamese Government.

Senator AIKEN. The ICC membership was made up of a member from Poland, India, and Canada. Have you talked with any of those people who were members at that time?

Mr. GELB. No, but I have read the record of the ICC proceedings over the years, sir.

Senator AIKEN. The record was prepared by the majority members of India and Poland. I hope you realize that?

Mr. GELB. Different recommendations were prepared by different members. Sometimes they were unanimous; many times they were not.

Senator AIKEN. What was the ICC supposed to do about refugees? Were they supposed to help the refugees who desired to leave North Vietnam and whom the United States helped at a later date in spite of the opposition of Hanoi? Was the ICC supposed to help the refugees?

Mr. GELB. They were supposed to assist refugees, but they had no facilities at their disposal to directly help them.

HANOI'S REFUSAL TO LET REFUGEES CALL ON ICC

Senator AIKEN. Do you know that the Hanoi Government would not let one single refugee come near the ICC for assistance? Do you realize that?

Mr. GELB. Well over a million people left what was called the Zone of North Vietnam to come south after the conclusion of the Geneva Conference.

Senator AIKEN. But do you know of any refugee that was permitted to call on the ICC for assistance?

Mr. GELB. I can't say whether it was specifically on the ICC, but I do know well over a million refugees moved from north to south.

HANOI GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL OF FOOD TO NONSYMPATHIZERS

Senator AIKEN. Did you know the Hanoi Government refused to permit food to be delivered to those people who they felt were not in sympathy with their government?

Mr. GELB. I wouldn't doubt that for a moment, sir, and as I said in my statement, I don't think that the Hanoi Government has performed any more morally or less brutally than the Saigon Government.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION CONCERNING VIETNAMESE ELECTIONS

Senator AIKEN. You do realize that after the Geneva conference or the Accords, if you persist in calling it that, had been signed by all but the United States and the South Vietnamese, it was signed by North Vietnam under the name of the Viet Minh, who later became the Hanoi Government? Do you realize that the next day there was some statement issued which was not signed by anybody to the effect that it was supposed to be a temporary arrangement and that elections would be held? Didn't the United States agree that elections could be held for the people of both North and South Vietnam? You must know that.

Mr. GELB. Yes, sir, although the language is somewhat ambiguous.

Senator AIKEN. Do you know what the difference of opinion was?

Mr. GELB. With respect to what, Senator Aiken?

Senator AIKEN. I might enlighten you by saying that North Vietnam insisted that the elections be held under the auspices of the ICC. The United States held that the elections should be held under the United Nations' auspices. That was the difference of opinion at that time, and that was why no elections were held. The United States refused to sign the conference report because they held that the country should not be divided.

IS VIETNAM ONE COUNTRY OR TWO?

In the last 2 months, I would say, North Vietnam has been insisting there is only one country. Do you regard that as one country or two countries?

Mr. GELB. I regard it as one country, sir, and the military provisions that were signed between the French and the Viet Minh in 1954 did not provide for two countries. It provided for two military zones in which the armies of each side would regroup.

Senator AIKEN. You regard it as one country now?

Mr. GELB. I do.

Senator AIKEN. Then why does every Communist nation in the world regard it as two countries—North Vietnam and South Vietnam—and have formal relationships with what they claim is the government of two countries. They do not recognize the government in Saigon as being a legitimate government, but they do have formal relationships with two countries; isn't that correct?

Mr. GELB. That is correct, sir.

Senator AIKEN. Then you differ with the other 20 or so Communist countries?

Mr. GELB. I have often differed with the Communist countries. [Laughter.]

Senator AIKEN. That might be a good idea. Some of them are pretty active.

HANOI PEACE TERMS

As I understand it, Hanoi has submitted terms on which they will agree to peace over there. There are seven phases of those terms. As I understand it, the United States refuses to accept two of them: One, the ouster of the Saigon Government. Do you agree that we should oust that without delay?

Mr. GELB. I do not, sir.

Senator AIKEN. You do not?

Mr. GELB. I do not.

Senator AIKEN. The other term is that we shall disarm the 17 million South Vietnamese people. Do you agree with that?

Mr. GELB. I do not.

PRESIDENT'S PEACE PROPOSALS

Senator AIKEN. You do not.

Do you agree with the peace terms or provisions on which we would get completely out of there, which were enunciated by President Nixon last night?

Mr. GELB. President Nixon said that complete withdrawal——

Senator AIKEN. You have read his speech?

Mr. GELB (continuing). In 4 months. Yes, I have.

Senator AIKEN. You have read his entire statement?

Mr. GELB. Yes, sir. Depending upon South——

Senator AIKEN. Did you read his proposals for peace in Indochina?

Mr. GELB. Yes, sir. I have.

Senator AIKEN. I would like to read it into the record because there might be someone here who has not heard it.

> First, all American prisoners of war must be returned.
>
> Second, there must be an internationally supervised ceasefire throughout Indochina.
>
> Once prisoners of war are released, once the internationally supervised ceasefire has begun, we will stop all acts of force throughout Indochina * * *

not Vietnam, Indochina—

> "* * * and at that time we will proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam within 4 months.
>
> Now, these terms are generous terms. They are terms which would not require surrender and humiliation on the part of anybody. They would permit the United States to withdraw with honor. They would end the killing. They would bring our POWs home. They would allow negotiations on a political settlement between the Vietnamese themselves. They would permit all the nations which have suffered in this long war * * *

Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam, South Vietnam—

> * * * to turn at least to the urgent works of healing and of peace. They deserve immediate acceptance by North Vietnam.

Would you agree that those are favorable terms or not? If not, in what way are they undesirable?

Mr. GELB. Well, I think by standards of negotiations between nation states, those are generous terms. But this is not a war between nation states. It is, in my judgment, a civil war and the kind of terms that are acceptable in wars among great powers don't hold for civil wars.

Go back and look at the experience of how civil wars have been concluded—our own, the one in China, Greece, Malaya, the Philippines—they cannot reach agreement in these wars for a political compromise because there is no trust, no loyalty, no confidence in the electoral process. These wars are tragically settled by force of arms and by whichever side is able to gain the most loyalty of the people.

President Nixon's proposals still don't go to that central fact. His proposals still treat this war as if it is some sort of outpouring of a monolithic Communist threat; that is why I don't think it is negotiable.

COMMUNIST THREAT IN VIETNAM

Senator AIKEN. You don't consider there is any Communist threat anyway; do you?

Mr. GELB. Excuse me?

Senator AIKEN. You don't consider there is any Communist threat, but what about——

Mr. GELB. In Vietnam?

Senator AIKEN. In Vietnam.

Mr. GELB. That threatens U.S. national interest in Vietnam—yes, sir.

NORTH VIETNAMESE DEMANDED DISARMAMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE

Senator AIKEN. But you do not favor then the North Vietnamese demand that we disarm the 17 million South Vietnamese?

Mr. GELB. No, I do not, sir.

Senator AIKEN. You don't?

Mr. GELB. I think if we were to set a date for the withdrawal of all American forces and carry that out, that there would be a process of political accommodation taking place among the South Vietnamese, a natural process that could lead to the ultimate conclusion of the war.

Senator AIKEN. But you do know that that is the one term out of two which the Communists insist upon our accepting as a condition for any further discussion of the other five points?

Mr. GELB. That is their publicly announced bargaining position: yes, sir.

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS AND MANSFIELD'S PROPOSALS

Senator AIKEN. Yes, indeed. Let me see. You would consider the President's proposal for peace worthless and unworkable?

Mr. GELB. I consider them worthless and unworkable, yes, I do for the ending of this Vietnam war.

Senator **Aiken**. You have the same opinion on the President's proposals last night. Would you give that to the Mansfield-Byrd amendment which is now before the Senate?

Mr. **Gelb**. I agreed with the old Mansfield amendment, Senator.

Senator **Aiken**. Do you see any difference between the President's proposals and the latest Mansfield proposal?

Mr. **Gelb**. I do. There is no call, so far as I understand, at least in the Church-Case bill, for a cease-fire and a cease-fire is a provision——

Senator **Aiken**. You mean the Mansfield amendment does not require a cease-fire?

Mr. **Gelb**. Does it? Perhaps I am not as familiar with it as I thought.

Senator **Aiken**. It looks to me like a clear case of highjacking the Mansfield amendment, and it seems very reasonable.

NORTH VIETNAMESE TAKING OF QUANGTRI

Do you feel that the United States escalated the war a month ago and intensified it when the troops from the north came down and took Quangtri and are now outside Hue? Do you think that we escalated that war at that time?

Mr. **Gelb**. Not at that particular point in time, no.

Senator **Aiken**. Do you think Russia was involved in any way?

Mr. **Gelb**. The Soviet Union is a supplier to the North Vietnamese Government just as we are a supplier to the South Vietnamese Government.

Senator **Aiken**. You wouldn't say that it was a diversionary tactic on the part of Russia, would you, to get all attention concentrated over on that side of the world rather than the Middle East?

Mr. **Gelb**. I wouldn't think so, in my judgment.

SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Senator **Aiken**. Do you think the Middle East is perfectly secure?

Mr. **Gelb**. No, I do not at all.

Senator **Aiken**. No.

Mr. **Gelb**. But it is another situation.

Senator **Aiken**. I wouldn't say either——

Mr. **Gelb**. But it is another situation, Senator Aiken, and no matter what the outcome in Vietnam, it seems to me, we have actions that we can take in our national interest in the Middle East and elsewhere to insure our interests, that the fate of those areas of the world is not dependent on an outcome in Vietnam.

EFFECT OF MINING THE COAST

Senator **Aiken**. I am losing my time. I still say, frankly, that I don't think that the mining of the coast is going to have any immediate effect on the battle that is going on over there now. If North Vietnam withdraws and tries another offensive in a year or two, it might have some effect, but not right now, other than being part of the war of nerves or the cold war which is going on.

RUSSIA SUGGESTED AS CHIEF CULPRIT

But I do believe that Russia is the principal culprit here because they evidently have been planning this invasion over there for a year or two. I am very suspicious that it is diversionary.

Why did Russia sail nuclear submarines where they were sure we would see them if it wasn't to bother us?

SHOULD PRESIDENT GO TO MOSCOW

Do you think that the President should go to Moscow?

Mr. GELB. Do I think he should go? Yes, I would like to see him go.

Senator AIKEN. I think he is going unless the Russians themselves tell him not to come, and that is that.

Mr. THOMSON. Senator Aiken, may I comment very briefly?

Senator AIKEN. Yes.

PREVIOUS PROPOSAL BY SENATOR AIKEN

Mr. THOMSON. I just want to endorse the answers that Mr. Gelb gave to your questions, and I would like to say, sir, that it struck me that one of the wisest proposals made for the solution to this war was made by you under a previous Administration, namely, that we declare victory and go home.

Now, what struck me last night was that the President did precisely the opposite of what you so wisely urged a while ago. He declared impending humiliation and said we will stay.

Senator AIKEN. May I ask why it is that none of you fellows showed the slightest inclination to help me when I tried to get President Johnson to withdraw and why it has been only in the last 2 years that a great many people have shown much interest in our getting out over there?

Mr. THOMSON. A lot of us were praying for you.

Senator AIKEN. Why is that? Hardly any of you would raise a hand to help me at that time.

Mr. GELB. Senator, I agreed with your proposal at the time you made it.

Senator AIKEN. Yes, I say some did, but the assistance was not overwhelming by any means. It was not——

[Laughter.]

Senator AIKEN (continuing). Very generous until about 2 years ago when everybody said we have a war over there.

TROOP WITHDRAWALS

Do you approve of the withdrawing of 90 percent of the troops we had in South Vietnam?

Mr. THOMSON. I would approve of withdrawing them all. Ninety percent is not quite enough.

Senator AIKEN. We were on the way; we would have withdrawn them all by July were it not for the new offensive.

Mr. THOMSON. Had we withdrawn them all, the President would not have the pretext of 60,000 troops whose lives were in danger.

Senator AIKEN. Last night there were only 60,000 troops remaining and 3 years ago in the spring of 1969 there were 543,500, I think. There has been a general withdrawal from Southeast Asia. I agree with you that Asia should look after some of these things themselves, and, finally, China is going to show some interest here in not promoting war.

That is all.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Percy?

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome Dr. Gelb back to the Hill. Dr. Gelb, I didn't realize when you left us in the spring of 1967 that Daniel Ellsberg would make you famous. We are glad to have you back here today.

And, Professor Thomson, we are happy to welcome you back to Washington. I should say we are happy to welcome Senator Muskie back to Washington, also.

I would like to review the President's proposals made last night, the three options he said were available to him: first, withdrawal; second, negotiations, and third, military action.

TIME TO HAVE ENDED U.S. INVOLVEMENT

I was told last year by a high level spokesman for the Administration that I or anyone who voted for the McGovern-Hatfield end-the-war amendment or the Mansfield amendment to end the war would rue the day that we had cast our votes for them. I cast my votes for them feeling we should have ended our involvement the end of last year, that we had the possibility of doing it at that time, and that if Vietnamization was going to work—if they were going to hack it on their own—that was the time to do it.

How would you view that in perspective now, 12 months later or so, whether or not that would have been the time to have really made a determined effort to get out, Dr. Gelb?

Mr. GELB. Well, I think the right time to have gotten out was or were the many occasions prior, 2 years ago, but that is hindsight, not foresight at all.

Most Americans agreed with the aims and goals of this war until quite late in the war, supported the Presidents.

By March, 1968, I think most had come to the clear realization that there was something wrong somewhere and I think at that point in time the decision should have been made to totally disengage U.S. forces. If we were right in 1968, it was right 2 years ago and it is right today. The argument that we can't get out now because the South Vietnamese are finally being tested seems to me the final absurdity of the positions the Administrations have offered over the years. It is precisely in order to let them test themselves that we said we were in there for all these years.

DESIRABILITY OF END-THE-WAR AMENDMENT THIS YEAR

Senator PERCY. As I understand your testimony, you feel that an end-the-war amendment sometime this year would be desirable, aimed at, say, a terminal point the end of this year. The present withdrawal rate, which is not dramatic—the President's present withdrawal rate is 10,000 a month, about half what it has been, but still 10,000 a month —would get us out by November 30; so the December 31 date is not really drastic. Is that correct?

Mr. THOMSON. The chairman asked us earlier what could be done, and we both very strongly affirmed our support for such an end-the-war amendment. This is one place where action can take place, and it is more imperative than it ever was. It was imperative 2 years ago, 10 years ago, and it might as well happen now.

ACTIVITIES AND LOCATION OF REMAINING U.S. FORCES

Senator PERCY. What are the men essentially doing now, the 60,000 or so that we have left? Six thousand we know are security forces, fighting forces providing backup security for the other 54,000, roughly. Are the others essentially advising the South Vietnamese forces or are they engaged in the decisions as to which equipment will be shipped back to the U.S. and which will be left for the South Vietnamese? What are those forces doing right now and where are they located?

Mr. GELB. Well, they are located throughout the country and they are performing a variety of functions. They are still giving military advice to units engaged in combat. Some are providing security for our own forces. Others are engaged in the universal process of staff operations, and yet others, and I think the bulk, are involved in logistical operations. I was told by many of our military officers coming back over the years that it was always necessary for the United States military to be involved in logistical operations, in driving trucks, because if we didn't drive trucks from the docks to the battlefield and the South Vietnamese did, the supplies would never get there.

SAFETY OF U.S. FORCES

Senator PERCY. I would like both of you to comment about the safety of American forces. None of us question the duty and responsibility of the President to provide for their safety. Taking into account the present North Vietnamese offensive waged on three fronts, can you give us your insight as to the level of safety those men have and what, if you were advising the President, you would advise with respect to the safety of those forces, and what he should do in connection with proposals for withdrawal, say, by the end of this year?

Mr. GELB. Well, I am not nearly familiar enough with the actual tactical battlefield situations to have any judgment on that. My only judgment would be that they would be safer if they were not there.

Mr. THOMSON. I would certainly support the last sentence. It strikes me that the determination to remove them fast, a determination that can be credibly communicated to the other side, is a communication that would be welcomed by the other side. They have no interest in inflicting that kind of "humiliation" on us. They know precisely what a commander-in-chief owes to his forces, and the wisest action we could take with regard to those troops would be to remove them at once, informing the other side of our intent to do so.

LOGISTICS OF STEPPING UP WITHDRAWAL

Senator PERCY. Now, from the standpoint of withdrawing them, if we decided to step up the rate to 20,000 or 30,000 a month, that would present no logistical problem from the standpoint of withdrawing them by air or sea. We have plenty of naval vessels there. Would there be any problem in withdrawing those forces if we make the decision to step up the withdrawal?

Mr. GELB. Senator, there was a study done in the Pentagon just before I left, when we had, as you know, over 500,000 men in Vietnam, with all their equipment, that all of these forces with their equipment could be pulled out in about 6 to 9 months. So if necessary we can perform that kind of feat.

Senator PERCY. How many forces were you talking about?

Mr. GELB. Over 500,000.

Senator PERCY. So 6 to 9 months was the time span for that. Therefore, we could withdraw our existing forces, and do so on a basis that wouldn't look like a route. We do have to take into account the demoralizing effect this might have on the South Vietnamese, but certainly they have been on notice, since for three and a half years we have been withdrawing. Two or 3 years ago, in conversations with the South Vietnamese ambassador, I asked, "Is there any question in your mind that the policy decision has been made by this country to get out and you are going to be on your own?" And I was told there was no doubt in his mind they were going to have to be on their own. So they have had a long advance notice.

If we decided to get those forces out in a reasonably short span of time—taking into account logistics, what they are doing and the duties they might be performing—you think they could be withdrawn in how short a span of time, or what would be the longest span of time that we could reasonably expect the Pentagon to get them out?

Mr. GELB. I am no logistical expert and the figure I gave you before was one I merely repeated, but if that is anywhere near true, they could have taken out over 500,000 men in 6 to 9 months, then certainly one could withdraw 60,000 men within 4 months, but I repeat, that is the judgment of others.

POSSIBILITY OF BLOODBATH

Senator PERCY. The President mentioned last night that, after an agreement, all our men could be out, lock, stock and barrel, in 120 days. From the standpoint of the withdrawal option available to the President, the President and the National Security Council obviously have given very careful consideration to the 17 million South Vietnamese. No one wants a bloodbath, and I suppose it is a question as to how you get the bloodbath, whether it comes on the ground or whether from the air. Certainly it is just as bloody when there is very intensive bombing and fighting in a country. But from historical perspective, from everything you have seen in the study and preparation of the papers now known as the Pentagon Papers, what is the prospect if we do withdraw in 120 days? What would literally happen in that country militarily and politically from the standpoint of the effect on those 17 million people? Would you envision a bloodbath?

Mr. Gelb. Senator, I think we have a clear obligation to provide refuge for all South Vietnamese who want to leave the country and I think we have a clear obligation to make that a serious policy where we pursue the line of action that I am suggesting.

I have no idea, really, how many people would want to seek refuge under that sort of arrangement. I have no doubt in my mind that there would be bloodletting. This is, as I have tirelessly repeated, a civil war and there is no escaping some of that.

But two things seem paramount in my own mind: First, that we are not the keeper of Vietnamese morality and, second, the gross judgment that the probability is very high that we will kill more people, more Vietnamese, by continuing this war, especially with the expanded bombing operations of the last few months, than will die in any subsequent bloodbath.

Mr. Thomson. Senator, I have heard the fear of the bloodbath invoked now for 7 or 8 years since I served on the National Security Council staff, and during those 7 or 8 years we have killed infinitely more people on both sides, infinitely more than any accommodation or ending of the civil war would involve. It strikes me the bloodbath danger has to be put in the context of the daily bloodbath we have inflicted on three countries.

Senator Percy. There is probably not any doubt that the objective of their vengeance would be those who have closely identified and associated themselves with the Saigon Government. They have already murdered 17,000, 18,000, 20,000 village chiefs and local officials. They have tried systematically to intimidate them, to try to get them not to hold office, and it is literally murder, murder in war.

LIKELIHOOD OF BLOODBATH OF INNOCENTS

From your own knowledge of their mentality, how they operate, how severe would you anticipate their reactions would be against the innocent, those who are not really associated with the effort but who are the peasants, the women, the children, whomever it may be? What would be the likelihood of a bloodbath of innocents? We get visions of 17 million people being slaughtered; that is one extreme. The other extreme would be that they would walk in and say, "All is forgotten; nothing is going to happen, no trials, nothing; just go on as you were." That is an extreme also not likely to occur. What would most likely happen?

Mr. Thomson. I might point out in answer, Senator Percy, that during the 20-odd years of this civil conflict, before it became so heavily escalated and before Vietnamese politics were frozen in the south by a heavy military government and a heavy American presence, accommodation was the norm, accommodation was the norm among political elements, and among apolitical elements—and the heavy proportion of the peasantry, the population of the country, is fairly apolitical. What they have sought is refuge from dropping bombs or shot bullets, and such people will accommodate to whatever the new reality may be.

Those at the very top who have identified themselves totally as officeholders and the like will certainly seek safe haven, refuge, as Mr.

Gelb rightly asserts we should provide them. Many in between will make the kind of accommodations that have so often been seen within Southeast Asian society over these years.

Mr. Gelb. Senator Percy, could I just add a postscript to that?

The people who live in the area we call Indochina are marvelous at making accommodations.

We all know that Souvanna Phouma, the Prime Minister of the government that we support, has had a tacit arrangement for years with the North Vietnamese Government not to go after and harass North Vietnamese forces on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, forces that were coming down the trail to kill American soldiers. If they can make that kind of convenient agreement, I think their possibilities are limitless.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE

Senator Percy. The impression is left that even when we get out that we will have to continue the bombing for an interminable period of time and that to not continue that bombing would leave the South Vietnamese army exposed and without support. Yet, as I questioned Secretary Laird as to the extent and size and power and resources of the South Vietnamese air force—it is hardly limited to Piper Cubs and leaflets—his testimony revealed that the South Vietnamese Air Force is one of the most formidable in the world today, that it has a thousand fighters and bombers, 500 big personnel carrier helicopters, and 40,000 trained airmen. And the North Vietnamese have never flown except in maybe one instance over South Vietnam; so the South Vietnamese have absolute air supremacy in the south.

If we did withdraw on an orderly basis over a period of 120, 150, 180 days from now, and we decided to stop bombing, what is your own feeling as to the effectiveness and the backup and support that would be provided by the South Vietnamese air force itself? Would we be leaving them helpless?

Mr. Gelb. If we would be leaving them helpless, there is nothing we can do to be helpful to them.

To my knowledge, the statistics which you have cited are correct. The South Vietnamese Air Force, like the South Vietnamese Army, is one of the largest in the world; in proportion to population it is the largest. If this kind of armed force in numbers and in quality of equipment can't hack it, one wonders whether they ever will. Something has always gone wrong with them, though, and I think it has less to do with their numbers and quality of equipment we provide them and more to do with their political situation and the quality of their leadership in the field—things that we can't solve.

Mr. Thomson. Senator Percy, I asked a former high State Department official a month ago as this offensive began, a man recently retired, what he would do at that juncture; and he said that if he were the President, he would commandeer every piece of flying equipment and every boat he possibly could and fly over to Vietnam members of the media, Members of the Congress, members of civic groups and the like and take them all over the country and show them what we have provided over the past 10, 15 years in the way of equipment, money, treasure, and the like, to these people so that they would know finally that we had done everything we could and that if in fact the South Vietnamese collapsed, it was not our doing.

EFFECT OF BOMBING ON NORTH VIETNAMESE AND ALLIES

Senator PERCY. I have one more question on the withdrawal option of the President's speech last night, and I should really ask it of a psychologist rather than scholars in your field. I have long felt as an amateur with some little knowledge of human nature, but not a scholarly knowledge, that the bombing in the north—while destroying some supplies, some fuel depots, and so forth—what good it did for our side was more than compensated by the North Vietnamese reaction to resist their enemy from the sky, and that it did more to solidify the north and cause them to wage this war with an intensity and hatred they might not otherwise have had, and also gave cause for their allies in Eastern Europe and China to support them with everything they were asked to provide.

WITHDRAWAL AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE LOYALTY AND WILL TO RESIST

From the standpoint of the morale and fighting spirit of the people in the South, to which we have tried to contribute for over a decade, if they now have that will, is this as good a time as any to decide whether anything we could do in the next 3 or 4 or 5 years would make the people more loyal to the Saigon Government, to give them the will to resist and fight, or to weigh the alternatives and maybe simply decide that they can't make it on their own? Will we, pulling out, make the big difference?

Mr. GELB. Well, you know there are some Vietnam experts and many people know much more about Vietnam itself than I do, but there are some Vietnam experts who have argued over the years that the only way to get those forces in South Vietnam who do oppose the takeover from the north, to assert themselves to coalesce, to gain a common loyalty, that the only way to do this is to withdraw the American presence. Our staying there certainly never has done this.

SENATOR AIKEN'S COMMENT COMMENDED

Senator PERCY. In concluding questioning on this option, I would say I supported the comment of Senator Aiken on withdrawal. I thought it was endowed with great wisdom, and I hope he reiterates it and sticks to it now as he did a few years ago. If it was true then, it may be true now, and I would hope that our policy would be based very strongly on a steady course of total withdrawal at the earliest and most rapid possible rate.

From the standpoint of the negotiations option, I would like to ask just a few questions, and then yield to my colleagues and come back later.

POSSIBILITY OF ENDING WAR BY NEGOTIATIONS

But to get started on that end of the second option the President actually worked with, our negotiations with the North Vietnamese actually began as far back as June 1964 with the Seaborn missions to Hanoi.

The Pentagon papers and subsequent events showed that during this entire 8-year period both sides really sought military victory and put little faith in negotiations.

Did negotiations ever have a real possibility of ending the war and, if so, when in your judgment?

Mr. GELB. I make a distinction, Senator Percy, between a political settlement and a military settlement. In my judgment a political settlement between Diem, Kahn, Ky, Thieu, groups that have controlled South Vietnam under U.S. auspices, political accommodation between them and the North Vietnamese has never been feasible, that if we were to step aside and allow other groups to find their own level, political level, that possibly there were grounds for such an agreement. But in the absence of that, we could do the only thing at our disposal and the only thing in our interest, namely, to step aside from the conflict itself, withdraw our forces from direct involvement, and let the political and military processes of the civil war work their way out.

EFFECT OF U.S. BOMBING ON NEGOTIATIONS

Senator PERCY. Was the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam an impediment to negotiations or did it in effect drive them to the bargaining table, and was it the bargaining chip that we were to use to get them finally and eventually to the bargaining table?

Mr. GELB. I doubt that very much. It is true, as you know, that many of our leaders over the years said that they thought of the bombing as a bargaining chip for negotiations; but the bombing really became the stumbling block to getting negotiations started because all those negotiations which you cite from the Seaborn mission in 1964, until the beginning of what are called substantive negotiations in October, 1968, were about whether or not and under what conditions to stop the bombing, not about how to settle the war.

Mr. THOMSON. Furthermore, the bombing itself, Senator Percy, had multiple and changing rationales, and one of the current rationales is to stiffen the spine of the south—which has very little to do with either breaking the will of the north or bringing them to the bargaining table.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ADMINISTRATION TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, will members of the Administration be given an opportunity to respond to some of these same questions in this set of hearings, because I am asking the same questions I would be asking them, no different at all. And they are not loaded questions; they are the kind of questions I think we need objective answers to and we need it on both sides of the question.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, they are always welcome. The Secretary of State has been invited, I guess, innumerable times. He has been a very busy man and has not seen fit to come, but he has a standing invitation to come at any time.

If you wish, I will issue a special invitation to him to come. Our trouble is not his finding a forum, it is getting him to come before this committee. As you know, Mr. Kissinger has declined to come.

Senator PERCY. The President having called the Secretary back on an emergency basis would be justification for saying that he himself personally could not appear, but if the Administration would like to have someone here during the course of the next few days or next week, a person of their own selection who could be a spokesman for the Administration, would that opportunity be offered to them?

The CHAIRMAN. Of course it would. We have invited Mr. Kissinger innumerable times. He refused to come on the grounds of, I guess, executive privilege. He refuses to come. We also, I may say, invited people who were formerly involved in this. We invited Mr. William Bundy. He declined to come. I stated all this at the beginning of the hearing. It is in the record. We have invited those who were participants in the study. The hearing was not, as the Senator knows, set to discuss last night's statement. This hearing has been set for 2 months. It was purely coincidental that it took place this morning after the President's speech. I didn't know the President was going to make the speech until 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

EFFECT OF PRESENT U.S. MILITARY ACTIONS ON PARTIES INVOLVED

Senator PERCY. Thank you. If the bombing did not drive them to the table, and did not encourage negotiations, then I would like to ask about the mining of Haiphong and the intensive bombing of rail lines and so forth.

From the standpoint of the parties involved, is this action now being undertaken by the U.S. military likely to drive them to more realistic negotiations and more favorable consideration of the President's proposals, or less consideration, and will it cause Peking and Moscow to put more or less pressure on them to seek a negotiated settlement? Dr. Thomson?

Mr. THOMSON. We tried to cover that subject to some degree earlier. Our own view, at least mine, is that this new escalation up north will, in fact, stiffen their spine, give them a new will to live, a new will to resist, a new will to achieve ultimate success. It strikes me that they have always known from the beginning of time that they live there and we don't, and that eventually we will go home; and even back in early 1965 when people were discussing the possibility of a bombing track, it was suggested by wiser men who knew Vietnam that even if bombed back into the stone age, the North Vietnamese would with reluctance permit the destruction of what they had built over the last 10 years, retreat back into the bush, and reappear once we had gone home—as we would eventually.

As for pressures from Peking and Moscow, it strikes me that, as Mr. Gelb put it earlier, we are trying to do to the Russians what Mr. Nixon tells us we face, namely, humiliate them through a kind of an ultimatum into putting pressure on Hanoi. It is very hard to judge whether Moscow or Peking have ever been able to control Hanoi; they have been able to give advice, to give aid; but ultimately small, determined allies are very independent people. It would seem to me that one consequence of last night's speech may well be the forcing together ever so slightly of Peking and Moscow in further support of Hanoi.

LIKELIHOOD OF HANOI'S BEING RESPONSIVE TO PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS

Senator PERCY. Senator Aiken has read into the record the proposals made by the President last night which I would look upon as generous, but coupled with the decisions in the military area, is there any real likelihood, knowing what we know about Hanoi, that they are going to be responsive to that peace offer as a basis for negotiations so long as this escalated military action accompanies it?

Mr. GELB. Senator, if I were an analyst in Hanoi, and were assigned to do a staff paper on whether or not my government ought to accept President Nixon's proposals, I think I could write a very persuasive paper that they ought to. Basically, though, my argument would come to rest on cheating. Let's sign on the dotted line, get the Americans out of there and then violate the agreement. That is sort of the alternative the President is giving them.

If you plan on that kind of deal, then the proposal is sensible. But I think it comes down to viewing this through their own special eyes as best we can because they are the other contestant in this war and they have a long history of being left in the lurch by agreements with major powers, and they are undoubtedly gun shy. The thought of their leaders, the same leaders who were there 15 and 20 years ago, accepting this kind of a proposal seems less than credible to me.

EFFECT OF MILITARY ESCALATION ON GETTING BACK POW'S

Senator PERCY. The President has put high emphasis on the prisoners of war. He mentioned in his speech last night that, of his conditions, first of all American prisoners of war must be returned, and then he coupled it with once prisoners of war are released, once the internationally supervised cease-fire has begun, we will cease all acts of force throughout Indochina and withdraw American forces within 4 months. He is deeply concerned about the prisoners of war and those missing in action. We all are.

What is your feeling as to the effect of the military escalation on the chances of getting back our men held prisoner?

Mr. THOMSON. I would suggest it has been hurt. It strikes me that there are two points to be made about the prisoners of war: The first is that they are the one major chip, the one piece of leverage which Hanoi has vis-a-vis Washington, and Hanoi is not going to give it up until it is sure we are going to take certain fundamental moves to get out totally. They are not going to trust us until we make those moves and they are not going to give up the chip until we make those moves. It is the norm in all wars that I know of, to exchange prisoners of war after the settlement, not as a precondition to the settlement.

WHAT COULD WE HAVE EXPECTED FROM NEGOTIATIONS?

Senator PERCY. I must say that I still hope there can be some negotiated settlement, because it is the only way to end all of the war. When the President announced his new proposals in October 1970, I introduced a resolution supporting them and it was unanimously accepted, so the Senate for the first time really backed the President. Those were realistic, flexible terms which were the basis for negotiations, not in any way a take-it-or-leave-it offer. The President made that very clear. Shortly thereafter I visited the chiefs of state of nine countries—at Dr. Kissinger's suggestion—nations which might have some leverage with Peking, Hanoi or Moscow, to ask them to help get across that these negotiating terms were flexible, reasonable and realistic.

What could we realistically have expected from negotiations?

Mr. GELB. Well, my own way of looking at it is that we can't expect too much in terms of an overall settlement. That would involve our taking a direct hand in overthrowing the present government of Saigon and I wouldn't like to see our country do that and I think it is unnecessary to do that.

I think the very act of American withdrawal would unseat these people because they have no support that goes much beyond our presence.

Mr. THOMSON. So the end product of negotiation later on would be a form of coalition government in the south, my guess would be.

Mr. GELB. It would be part of the natural process.

Mr. THOMSON. It would be accomplished through osmosis and process rather than imposition by the U.S.

Senator PERCY. But you do feel if it had been possible to present at some time frame in the past some sort of coalition government—and we would have been willing to have seen that happen—that we could have had some degree of success in negotiations and an end to the war?

Mr. GELB. Then we would have had some responsibility for that coalition government because we would have been part of its creation, and I think that this is their business, not our business. I would like to see them form their own coalitions through their own processes.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I have a few more questions on option No. 2 and then I would like to get into option No. 3, which is the one the President selected. But I would like to yield back to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, because we do have a caucus after a bit and I will then turn it over to you.

PROVISIONAL MILITARY DEMARCATION LINE

Because this keeps recurring, I want to read one paragraph from the Geneva Accords into the record because members seem to forget it. This is the final declaration of the Geneva Convention, July 21, 1954, and section 6 reads:

> The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Vietnam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Vietnam.

Then, of course, there are the provisions in the agreement of the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam on July 20, 1954, which was primarily the military settlement of the war between the French and Vietnamese. I quote part of article 1. This is merely to identify it for purposes of people who wish to pursue it:

> The provisional military demarcation line is fixed as shown on the map attached. So it refers to that. There was no question about the intention of all the people in Geneva except the United States that it wasn't two countries.

WHAT IS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN WRONG

I refer again, at the risk of seeming to belabor a matter because I think it is fundamental, Dr. Gelb, to your thesis, which I think needs emphasis. You very forcefully repeat it in your statement: "Something is wrong somewhere. Something always has been wrong." You have touched on this, but I think it is well since we are reviewing the past which was really the purpose of this hearing. It is the intrusion of the President's speech that has occasioned its discussion, not that I object to it but it is a coincidence. Could you elaborate a bit on what it is that was wrong. You emphasize it so clearly there, and in the next paragraph you say. "Without this legitimacy, and the quest for it seems never-ending, the Saigon regime perpetually will require American support."

I think for the enlightenment of the committee, you ought to elaborate on it because you had something more in mind than those words today.

Mr. Gelb. Yes, sir. Vietnam always hasn't been one country. It has been divided by conquerers in the past. It was divided into administrative regions by the French. At the beginning of World War II, as is well known, a group calling themselves the Viet Minh came into being to drive out the French and the Japanese, and to create a national state, a single national state. All evidence points to the fact that most Vietnamese supported the Viet Minh. There were not that many collaborators. It was a strong national movement, a movement that, in the judgment of every scholar I know, every historian I know, of Vietnam, would have in the natural course of events come to power in all of Vietnam. This doesn't mean they were without opposition. No political group in any country is without opposition. That isn't the issue. The point is it was a movement to establish their own country free from foreign domination.

If you look at the Pentagon papers you will see that in 1947 and 1948 our own intelligence community and our specialists in the State Department recognized this. and they couldn't find any direct links or strings being pulled on Ho Chi Minh from Moscow. They questioned in a memo to the Secretary of State at that time, Dean Acheson, whether there was any intimate connection at all beyond the fact that Ho Chi Minh in addition to being a national was also a Communist.

The Chairman. Acheson concluded he was, though; didn't he?

Mr. Gelb. Well, it is not clear that he concluded he was, but I think he concluded for reasons having little to do with Vietnam itself, that the U.S. ought to help the French, whether Ho Chi Minh was controlled from Moscow or not, and I think we know, moving a jump further in history, that the President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower believed that Ho Chi Minh had the support of the overwhelming majority of the Vietnamese people, some 80 percent, not all, but what President of the United States could command 80 percent? It has been a long time.

There have been groups in opposition to Viet Minh, groups of various character, some depending very directly on the United States, some of really indigenous quality. These groups have never been able to get themselves together. It seems that their common conflicts are greater than their common interests, and so in the natural course of events, with the repressive and I think obviously repressive regime of Diem, the Viet Minh forces began to gain power again and once Vietnam was in danger of being lost to these forces, the U.S. began to step in very heavily; but all through this process you see contending forces within a nation seeking independence and seeking to settle their question of who shall be the government of their own country, and you see at the same time outside powers coming in to tip the scales one way or another, succeeding because they were large powers, in perpetuating the war but never ending it. I think that is what was behind my statement, sir.

COOPERATION IN RESCUING U.S. PILOTS AND FIGHTING JAPANESE

The CHAIRMAN. You have refreshed my memory on one other point, on which perhaps you are informed. Was it correct that about 1944 or 1945 American officers, specifically, I believe, a Colonel Gallagher, cooperated with Ho Chi Minh in the rescue of American pilots and fighting the Japanese in North Vietnam? Do you remember something about that?

Mr. GELB. Yes, there was cooperation when the U.S. OSS (Office of Strategic Services) teams and Viet Minh—the extent of that is not clear.

The CHAIRMAN. It seems to me I recall in one of Bernard Fall's books that our own OSS recommended Ho Chi Minh very highly to our own people as the most effective man to combat the Japanese during that period in the latter days of the war, when Ho Chi Minh was released from prison, I believe, in China. He came down there. I am not exactly clear on the time, but we will go into this later.

BACKGROUND OF MEMBERS OF PRESENT SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

Arising out of one of Senator Percy's questions, I meant to ask also about the present government of South Vietnam. Was General Ky a member of the French Air Force during the war between 1946 and 1954? Do you remember? Do either one of you know?

Mr. GELB. I just can't remember. I think so.

Mr. THOMSON. I can't remember.

The CHAIRMAN. Where did General Ky learn to fly an airplane? Did we train him or did the French?

Mr. GELB. I believe the French, but I am not certain.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know whether General Thieu was a northerner or a southerner?

Mr. GELB. I believe he was——

The CHAIRMAN. By birth?

Mr. GELB. I believe both Ky and Thieu were northerners.

The CHAIRMAN. Were they not both members of the French Air Force or the French Army? Armed Forces? You don't know?

Mr. GELB. To the best of my recollection; yes.

WAS FORMER PRESIDENT DIEM A COLONIAL GOVERNOR?

The CHAIRMAN. Was former President Diem a colonial governor before the war? Do you know that?

Mr. GELB. I believe he was, sir.

HO CHI MINH'S PLEADING CAUSE OF INDEPENDENT VIETNAM

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned Mr. Ho Chi Minh beginning this process in World War II. I seem to have read that as early as the Versailles conference he appeared and pleaded the cause of an independent Vietnam. Do you know anything about that?

Mr. GELB. What you say is correct, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. It is correct?

Mr. GELB. He sought to get an audience, I believe; it was denied him.

The CHAIRMAN. He was that early, pleading the cause of an independent Vietnam: is that right?

Mr. GELB. Yes, sir.

Mr. THOMSON. That is correct.

FEUDAL TYPE OF UNITY IN VIETNAM

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned the government from time to time had been divided. I mean, there were the three principal provinces of Vietnam. Did it or did it not have at least a feudal type of unity under an emperor? Was there an emperor who was generally referred to as the emperor of Vietnam?

Mr. GELB. Bao Dai was considered the emperor of Vietnam.

The CHAIRMAN. Hereditary emperor; is that correct?

Mr. GELB. I believe so.

Mr. THOMSON. Technically, he was Emperor of Annam.

The CHAIRMAN. What?

Mr. THOMSON. Emperor of Annam, Bao Dai. But going back in history there was a unified empire, a Vietnamese empire, built on the Chinese Confucian model.

ASSUMPTION THIS IS NOT A CIVIL WAR

The CHAIRMAN. That was my impression. There were three large provinces, but they considered themselves part of Vietnam. The only reason I mentioned it is with reference to this fundamental assumption which recurs in this and previous Administration's statements that this is not a civil war. It relates to your very strong statement that this is a civil war. that it isn't a war between two independent nation states and never has been. Is that not your position?

Mr. GELB. Yes, it is, sir.

Mr. THOMSON. That has been one of our greatest stumbling blocks because men in government have in fact believed, have themselves considered that it was not a civil war when all along it has been very clear to all participants and to all scholars that it is a civil war.

VIETNAMESE UNITY WHILE FIGHTING FRENCH

The CHAIRMAN. Originally it was a colonial war. It was the Viet Minh fighting the French; wasn't it?

Mr. THOMSON. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. And at that time, except for the French forces, there was great unity, even though, as Dr. Gelb has said, they were not unanimous. But I believe in Eisenhower's book, "Mandate for

Change," he says if the election had been held during the fighting, Ho Chi Minh would have received 80 percent of the votes. This does relate, I think, to the way you look at it, but our Government has misrepresented this in its rhetoric all along for many years, but it is rather essential.

UNIQUENESS OF U.S. SUPPORT OF COLONIAL POWER

Do you recall any other case in the history of the United States where it took the side of the colonial power to assist it to retain control of a colony?

Mr. THOMSON. It doesn't come to mind, but I might just point out that there was an anomaly, Senator Fulbright, that grew sadly out of the death of President Roosevelt, because otherwise in Southeast Asia we elected to urge our allies, our wartime allies, to divest themselves of their colonial holdings. The plan of President Roosevelt had been at one stage of the war to put Indochina under international trusteeship. He felt very strongly that the French should not come back and he was supported by the Far East Division in the State Department.

With the President's death, however, in April 1945, power shifted within the Department of State—this is being brought out by documents now being published—power shifted to the European Bureau, and those who felt that our relations with France must be paramount prevailed in the advice that was given to President Truman. And it was as a result of this bureaucratic power shift, basically, that we did support the French return and then, in due course, financed the French war.

The CHAIRMAN. You know of no similar instance in which this country has supported a colonial power in such fashion, do you?

Mr. THOMSON. It doesn't come to mind.

The CHAIRMAN. It doesn't come to my mind, either. It ought to come to your mind if it occurred since you are an historian.

Mr. THOMSON. I am searching my mind, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. We haven't had that long a history; I can't think of any case.

Mr. THOMSON. We did support the Government of Pakistan against a government in Bangladesh, but it is a fairly recent phenomenon.

The CHAIRMAN. I am not sure you are correct in saying that is a colonial holding. They were created once at the same time as part of India. I don't think it was ever commonly regarded as a colony.

Mr. THOMSON. Only by the Bengalis.

The CHAIRMAN. Only by the Bengalis is correct. But Vietnam was not considered a colony only by the Vietnamese. It had been acknowledged as a colony by everybody for 75 or 80 years or so; hadn't it?

Mr. THOMSON. I think that is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. I don't think that is an analagous situation. Besides that, what did we do for the Pakistanis, if you wish to make a case for it, other than to tilt the rhetoric a little? We had already given them the arms before that. We did nothing very specific at that particular time.

Mr. THOMSON. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Whereas, we did a great deal in this case.

ACCEPTANCE OF POLITICAL MISJUDGMENT OR ERROR

This is a unique instance and it is another reason why I think your theory that the acceptance of a political misjudgment or error is the right way, if you are ever going to cleanse their minds of the afflictions that have grown up through these wars. I see nothing wrong or immoral about that. This is wnat I started out asking. I don't understand why a country, just as an individual, can't accept the idea that they could be wrong in a political judgment. There is nothing immoral about that. It goes back to the same period in which we took also a peculiar attitude toward the indigenous forces in China; did we not, Mr. Gelb? I mean, this is about the same time we were making up our minds in a slightly different case. China was not quite a colony although it had been chewed up and treated like a colony by many of the European countries. Each got parts of it. But we were unduly influenced by an obsession with ideological matters during that period; were we not?

Mr. THOMSON. Our intervention in the Chinese civil war was sufficiently halfhearted to win us the enmity of both sides eventually.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, and was equally unsucessful, I mean.

Mr. THOMSON. It was highly unsuccessful. Fortunately, we did not press it as far as we have been encouraged to press it in Vietnam. And to some degree I am afraid it was the memory of China's loss and the consequences thereof in this country that forced one president after another to hang on in Vietnam.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

WAS PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ADMISSION OF FAILURE OF VIETNAMIZATION?

Let's see. I was left a question by Mr. Muskie.

Mr. Muskie says he has to go to the floor. He asks, do you feel that last night's statement by the President was, among other things, an admission that Vietnamization was a failure?

Mr. THOMSON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree with that?

Mr. GELB. I would say at least it was an admission that he didn't want to take the chance and see.

WHAT HAVE NORTH VIETNAMESE OR RUSSIANS DONE?

The CHAIRMAN. This is another question he left here. What is it that the North Vietnamese have done to the United States or that the Russians have done or that either have done, that would justify the actions that we are taking?

Mr. THOMSON. It strikes me, sir, that the North Vietnamese have proved a determination to survive and prevail and that, in itself, has caused the American Presidents to feel impending humiliation at his doorstep; that is all they have done. And another kind of leader from a different vantage point could have construed that reality in different terms.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any comment on that, Mr. Gelb?

Mr. GELB. I agree with it, sir.

RATIONALE FOR 1965 BOMBING

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gelb, I believe you were there at the time. Could you tell us what the rationale was for the bombing that began in February of 1965?

Mr. GELB. I was not in the executive branch of Government at that time.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you, Mr. Thomson?

Mr. THOMSON. I was in the executive branch at the time, sir, and the rationale, as I remember, was multiple, as I have suggested. It was originally to break their will, but with the bombing of the Pleiku barracks in the first week of February, an additional incentive was, as I have suggested, to stiffen Saigon's spine. So it began with dual aims: to break the will of the north and to stiffen the spine of the south, but eventually there was added to it the hope of inducing the north into some kind of a conference situation—though by the way the negotiatory options were phrased at the time, in retrospect, it seems that that conference would have been one in which to receive their surrender.

Mr. GELB. It was also a means of restricting the flow of supplies of men from north to south.

Mr. THOMSON. Correct. The further rationale was to try to cut the infiltration routes.

RATIONALE FOR 1964 STRIKE ON CITY OF VINH

The CHAIRMAN. What was the rationale for the strike on, I believe, the city of Vinh on August 4, 1964? Do either one of you know? That, I believe, was the first overt, substantial strike. Are either one of you familiar with that incident?

Mr. THOMSON. I don't have clear recollection of that.

Mr. GELB. Are you talking about the Tonkin Gulf incident?

The CHAIRMAN. There was an alleged second incident on August 7. What I am asking you is, insofar as you deduct or have found out from the papers or your personal experience, what was the real reason for that strike, not the alleged reason?

Mr. GELB. Well, if we look at the papers, and I can't say this from my own firsthand experience, but if we look at the papers, I think our leaders were trying to send Hanoi a message.

Mr. THOMSON. The phrasing was "to show them we mean business," whatever that means.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that what the papers indicate?

Mr. GELB. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. It was to send them a message. We hear that phrase in current political statements around the country, trying to send Washington a message. Some of them are succeeding pretty well up to a point, but the message has not gotten through yet.

Mr. THOMSON. One finds, Mr. Chairman——

The CHAIRMAN. I wondered if you had studied it. You know what I am talking about, Mr. Thomson; don't you?

Mr. THOMSON. I am not entirely on the track.

The CHAIRMAN. There have been three or four books written about this incident. The latest one I have seen is Mr. Austin's, of the New York Times. It proves pretty conclusively—I suppose that depends upon a lot of other things, one's own experience and background—that the alleged incident didn't occur.

Mr. THOMSON. I can speak bluntly to that point.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what I am asking you about.

Mr. THOMSON. I was in the White House. The NSC staff at the time and some of my colleagues indicated very clearly that there was no credible evidence that the second incident had, in fact, ever taken place. It was judged, however, to be useful nonetheless, to show, as the papers regularly put it. our will or our resolve, regardless of the absence of a clear *casus belli.*

The CHAIRMAN. And this was interpreted to mean if we showed the will then the North Vietnamese would surrender. I mean, being faced with such overwhelming power, they would stop. Is that really the way they were thinking?

Mr. THOMSON. "Would be brought to their knees" was the phrase that was used.

The CHAIRMAN. And, in effect, be willing to settle it on our terms; is that correct? Is that a fair summary?

Mr. THOMSON. That was the hope, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. So, again, that was rather a serious mistake in judgment, too; wasn't it?

Mr. THOMSON. It was, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Percy says he would like to ask a few more questions. I am going to have to leave in 5 minutes because I have a caucus coming up, but you proceed if you like.

Senator PERCY. Thank you, sir. I will keep my questions short and possibly with brief answers we can cover all the areas that I have in mind at this time.

KEY ISSUES DIVIDING TWO SIDES

What do you see as the key issues that now divide the two sides and on which agreement must be reached before a settlement can be made on a negotiated basis?

Mr. THOMSON. Well, the key ultimate issue is who controls the south.

Senator PERCY. Is what?

Mr. THOMSON. Who shall control the south, and that is an issue on which neither side will give way so far.

Senator PERCY. So that you are taking a very dim outlook for a negotiated settlement?

Mr. THOMSON. Well, when I say which side controls the south, there is built into that phrasing a concept of timetable. One has heard over recent years from high levels of even this administration the thought of a decent interval, an interval between a settlement that has the look of nondefeat, and the actual passing of control in the south to the Communists. It sounds cynical and it may well be hypocritical, but there are those in policy positions who generally believe that the creation of a decent interval must be item 1 on our agenda because without such an interval between the settlement and, let us say, the communization of the south, the administration would run into severe trouble at home and abroad. It may be correct in its assessment of the home-side consequences, although I doubt it; but I think it is very unlikely that it is correct in its assessment of world-wide consequences.

EXTENT OF NORTH VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PURPOSES

Senator PERCY. To what extent do you think the negotiations have been carried on by the North Vietnamese simply for the purpose of public relations?

Mr. THOMSON. I think all parties to intense negotiations stress a public relations aspect of the negotiations, which is the external look at the process. One is trying to drum up support, trying to look credible. There is at the heart of the matter the hope for a happy outcome; so I would say that "public relations" would oversimplify Hanoi's intent.

JASON STUDY GROUP CONCLUSION CONCERNING BLOCKADING NORTH VIETNAM

Senator PERCY. Dr. Gelb, if I can turn to the third alternative, the one that the President is pursuing, an Institute of Defense Analyses study that was included in one version of the Pentagon papers concluded that blockading North Vietnam would not work. Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. GELB. That was the conclusion of what was called the Jason Study Group. They, as you know, not only looked at the blockade alone but also at an all-out bombing campaign at the same time and I think the conclusions which they came to are similar to the ones I offer about the potential effect of President Nixon's current actions.

Senator PERCY. We were bombing very close to the China border back in the Johnson administration, and that involved very grave risk.

TIME SPAN IN MOVING NORTH VIETNAMESE SUPPLIES SOUTH

The avowed purpose of trying now to engage in this new escalation is to defend and protect our American forces.

How long would it take supplies ordinarily, if not interdicted as they came in from China by rail, or knocked out as they passed through North Vietnam, under conditions today to reach forces using them against American forces?

Mr. GELB. That is how long would it take if they could not be moved by rail?

Senator PERCY. If they did slip through under present conditions, how long would it take those supplies to eventually reach forces of North Vietnam using those supplies, ammunition, and tank fuel against the remaining American forces?

Mr. GELB. I don't know if I am competent to give that particular judgment, sir. I do know that from almost 1966, 1967, and 1968, various times under President Johnson, authority was granted to strike everything that moved, trucks and trains, and under those circumstances in 1968 at the height of the bombing, the North Vietnamese were still able to move an enormous amount of supplies down into the south.

That is the only basis of comparison that I have.

Senator PERCY. But if they are subjected to intensive bombing as they are now, what is the time span? Can you get down there in 30 days? Or does it take 6 months for fuel and ammunition to move all the way down the country?

Mr. GELB. Well, under battle conditions from the northern border down into the south, it certainly would take more than 10 days and clearly less than 6 months. The exact time would depend on how many trucks they had available, whether they traveled at night or during the day, factors such as that.

1965 CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE CHINESE INTERVENTION

Senator PERCY. Professor Thomson, the Pentagon Papers also indicated that in 1965 the President's advisers feared a massive bombing of North Vietnam would bring Chinese intervention. Was that judgment a sound judgment at the time?

Mr. THOMSON. We had within the Government at the time, Senator Percy, some very talented kinds of watchers, particularly Allen Whiting, who had done a remarkable book on Chinese intervention in the Korean war, and such men as Whiting felt that the tripwire that would bring China in would be, as I suggested earlier, any U.S. move that looked as if it might displace and overthrow the regime in North Vietnam, the established state in North Vietnam, and thereby endanger Chinese borders.

It was also feared, however, that bombing close to China's border and the doctrine of hot pursuit might bring us into a situation where MIG's were stationed across the border on Chinese fields, and American forces would feel compelled to cross that border.

By and large, I think the concern over possible Chinese intervention was appropriate, and I think by and large that although we came fairly close, we played that particular game with prudence.

EFFECT OF LATEST ACTIONS ON PRESIDENT'S CHINA POLICY

Senator PERCY. From the standpoint of our relationship with China, the President has enunciated a very clear policy of negotiation rather than confrontation, and he has gone to extraordinary efforts to further this objective.

Will Peking be responsive to tourism, to cultural exchanges? There have been fairly large groups which have left from Mexico recently. Another group went and came back with glowing reports about how well they had been received, but so far as I know—other than the President's trip, the businessmen, the Scott-Mansfield trip and a few tourists—there has been no further word from Peking.

What effect do you think this latest action by the President is likely to have on moving us slowly, gradually, cautiously, toward further negotiation rather than confrontation?

Mr. THOMSON. Well, I might point out that without much publicity, small groups of Americans are fairly regularly traveling to China these days—student groups, Chinese-American scholars and the like.

The dean of China studies in this country, John Fairbank, is departing with his wife for 2 months in China this week, which is something of a breakthrough. By and large, though, there is no open faucet for travel or trade between China and the United States; and Peking, I am sure, will tend to keep a very tight hand on the closed faucet or the slim trickle of travelers and traders. It is quite clear that Peking's pride, Peking's own sense of its worth as an ally, is engaged in the troubles we are inflicting on North Vietnam.

It is further clear that Peking regards trade and travel and negotiations on all such issues as matters that will be held up until we shape up, so to speak, from their vantage point. So I can see nothing but roadblocks to further progress on the Washington-Peking negotiatory front as a result of the moves the President made last night.

PROSPECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION

Senator Percy. Dr. Gelb, would you care to comment on the prospects for negotiations on very key, important areas of mutual interest with the Soviet Union and what this will do? Is this going to have any effect? Will it have an adverse effect? Will it have a positive effect?

Mr. Gelb. I can't believe it will have a positive effect. I know there are many who believe that the only way to deal with the Soviet Union is with a bludgeon and a sword, but it has not been clear to me that that approach has proved very successful. I think both nations over the last couple of years have indicated a greater willingness to talk to each other about common interests, even though conflicting, really conflicting interests do exist.

I can't help but believe that by pushing the Soviet Union into this box, a box which the President himself feels is ridden with humiliation, can do nothing except injure relations between us and the Soviet Union.

Senator, may I ask a question of my colleague?

Senator Percy. You certainly can.

PRESIDENT'S SAYING NOTHING ABOUT CHINA IN SPEECH

Mr. Gelb. The President gave so much attention to the Soviet Union at the end of his speech; he said nothing about China. How would you explain that?

Mr. Thomson. Well, I am convinced that the master planners in the White House assume that Peking's greatest sense of threat comes from those nearly 1 million Soviet troops along China's 4,500-mile frontier with the Soviet Union and from the saber rattlers in the Kremlin.

Clearly, Mr. Nixon does not want to jeopardize his relations with China, but he does feel quite obviously that he can go fairly far in twitting Moscow without bringing a threat to bear on Peking.

My fear, however, is that they may very much overplay and overestimate Peking's tolerance of our actions in Southeast Asia and Peking's obsession with the Soviet Union.

Senator Percy. Your testimony has been extremely helpful and thought-provoking for us.

TOMORROW'S WITNESSES

These hearings will now be recessed until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Our witnesses tomorrow on the same subject will be Professor Schlesinger of City University of New York and Professor Chomsky of MIT.

INVITATION TO ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES

I would ask the staff of the committee to indicate to the Administration the suggestion that I have made and the invitation of the chairman for any Administration witnesses who would like to appear in the course of these hearings, so that we may have as balanced a picture as we can possibly have. I appreciate the chairman's willingness to have that done.

(Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, to reconvene at 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 10, 1972.)

CAUSES, ORIGINS, AND LESSONS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 1972

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 4221, New Senate Office Building, Senator J. W. Fulbright (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Fulbright, Symington, Pell, Javits, and Percy.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

OPENING STATEMENT

Today we are continuing the hearings on the causes, origins, and lessons of the Vietnam war. Because of the President's Monday night message to the country, yesterday's hearings dealt to a great extent with current U.S. actions in Vietnam. Such a trend in the discussion was to be expected, given the fact that present policy in Indochina represents a fairly consistent continuation of our earlier policies. For instance, many of the original rationales for intervention remain with us, however implausible they may seem today; and, of course, the unlearned lessons of the Vietnam experience continue to haunt us. We will, therefore, continue in a historical vein to address the question of how we became involved in Vietnam, bearing in mind the direct relevance of such an approach to current policy.

We are fortunate indeed to have with us today two witnesses who have devoted considerable study to the field of Vietnam policy.

Our first witness will be Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., from the City University of New York, who was formerly an aide to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He will be followed by Professor Noam Chomsky of MIT, author of numerous scholarly works in this field.

Gentlemen, we are very pleased that you have been willing to come here. The coincidence of your appearance with the developments in Vietnam only adds, I think, greater interest to your testimony.

Dr. Schlesinger, will you begin, please?

STATEMENT OF PROFESSOR ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Your entire statement will be put in the record as written and you may do as you please—comment on it or read it.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I will summarize portions and read portions. The statement is too long for a full reading.

As an historian, I want first to commend the committee for undertaking this complex and difficult inquiry. I am sure that future historians will be mystified when, looking back at the 1950's and 1960's—even the early 1970's—they try to figure out what led successive American Presidents to suppose that our national interest and security were so vitally involved in the fate of a small country on the mainland of Southeastern Asia as to justify the blood, destruction, atrocity and agony for which American policy has been responsible. I have no doubt that these hearings, and any conclusions the committee may draw, will provide material of inestimable importance for scholars in generations to come.

Let me also say at the start that there is, in my judgment, no single answer to our problem. What I will endeavor to do is disentangle what seem to one historian significant threads of thought and policy that led us to so ghastly a culmination in Southeastern Asia. Limitations of time will oblige me to make my points quickly and crisply but, I hope, without undue oversimplification. I must add that I am conscious that I myself at earlier times have shared some of the illusions I will discuss today. I only wish that I had understood earlier what I think I understand now; and I certainly do not seek to exempt myself from a share, however trivial, of personal responsibility for going along with directions of policy whose implications did not become evident to me until the summer of 1965.

U.S. CONVICTIONS ABOUT POSTWAR ROLE

The United States entered the postwar world with two leading convictions about its future world role: the conviction that the United States had an obligation to create and defend a global structure of peace and the conviction that the United States had a democratizing mission to the world. These were perfectly honorable convictions. However, the pressures and temptations of the postwar situation led to the catastrophic overextension and misapplication of valid principles, a process that culminated horribly in the Indochina tragedy.

PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Let us look first at the principle of collective security. The foreign policy of the U.S. since the Second World War has been in the hands of the generation which came of age between 1914, the start of the First World War, and 1953, the end of the Korean war. Every generation is the prisoner of its own experience; and for this generation the critical international experience was the defense of the peace system against one or another aggressive power. Peace, it was said, was indivisible; appeasement would only encourage aggression. Aggression anywhere, if unchecked and unpunished, would threaten the independence of nations everywhere. The preservation of peace, therefore, required the reestablishment of the peace system through collective action against aggression by the world community.

This was the view of the world envisaged by Woodrow Wilson, the view implied by the Stimson doctrine, the view substantiated by the failure of appeasement at Munich, the view argued by President Roosevelt during the Second World War, the view reasserted in the Truman doctrine, the view doggedly reaffirmed by President Johnson in the 1960's and, indeed, the view expressed by President Nixon in the last couple of weeks.

I know that to the young discussion of international affairs in these formalistic terms seems so unreal that they presume this language must be a mask for other and unavowed motives. But it would be, I think, a mistake not to recognize that, especially for the generation that grew up under the shadow of Hitler, these words have meaning. Nor, I trust, will we as a nation abandon the objective of collective security.

Yet, as we consider Vietnam, we see that something obviously went wrong with the application of the doctrine. Some would date the beginning of the degeneration of the collective security idea with the Truman doctrine of 1947. In a sense, this was so, though I would emphasize "in a sense" because the inflation in the Truman period was in words rather than in deeds. While President Truman declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure." Truman himself was selective in the employment of this drastic proposition. He did not himself construe it in a crusading way, applying it neither to Eastern Europe nor to China as it was applied to Greece and Turkey. Moreover, Truman, after carrying through the greatest demobilization in history in 1945–46, kept defense spending thereafter under tight control. In 1947–50, national security expenditures averaged only $13 billion a year. By 1949 the Army was down to 10 active divisions. This was hardly the military posture of a state bent on establishing a world empire. The Korean war changed all that, and in the fifties the United States Government began to live up to the rhetoric of the Truman doctrine.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY IDEA LOST LIMITATIONS

The original collective security idea had been that clearcut acts of aggression by major states required collective intervention to restore an equilibrium of power. In the fifties this idea lost its limitations. It was subtly transformed into the doctrine that almost any form of foreign trouble, whether caused by large or small states, whether or not the elements of a balance of power situation existed, whether the trouble was external or internal in origin, required intervention, if necessary, by America alone.

Secretary of State Dulles carried this generalization to the point of absurdity and danger, making it a systematic policy to overcommit American power and prestige all around the world.

The success of communism anywhere, Dulles felt, would put in question the will and power of the United States everywhere. It was in this mood that, having supported the French in Indochina in the years after 1948, we began to replace the French after 1954. The National Security Council had already in early 1952 declared that "Communist domination, by whatever means, of all Southeast Asia would seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, U.S. security interests."

The reason for this, in the NSC view, was what would later be termed the domino effect: "the loss of any single country would probably lead to relatively swift submission . . . by the remaining countries of this group." This remained the perspective in which the American Government saw Vietnam.

If it was hard to argue that the threat presented by the Viet Cong and Ho Chi Minh was comparable to the threat presented by Hitler in the thirties, our Government responded by inflating the threat and contending that our adversaries in Vietnam actually constituted the spearhead of a planned Chinese system of expansion in East Asia. This was the NSC view in the early fifties.

President Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs that the conflict—

> began gradually, with Chinese intervention, to assume its true complexion of a struggle between Communism and non-Communist forces rather than one between a colonial power and colonists who were intent on attaining independence.

By 1967 Vice President Humphrey could cry:

> The threat to world peace is militant, aggressive Asian Communism, with its headquarters in Peking, China. The aggression of North Vietnam is but the most current and immediate action of militant Asian countries.

As he left the White House, President Eisenhower told President-elect Kennedy that if the United States could not persuade other nations to join in saving Laos from Communism, then it should be ready "as a last desperate hope, to intervene unilaterally." This further notion, the notion that America, as the peculiar and appointed guardian of world peace, was entitled to act militarily on its own, represented the final and fatal perversion of the original doctrine of collective security.

Soon President Kennedy was saying in his inaugural address that Americans—

> shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.

Four years later, President Johnson said:

> History and our own achievements have thrust upon us the principal responsibility for protection of freedom on earth.

By now a useful and limited idea had been corrupted by messianism and America was assuming a role as judge, jury, and executioner for all mankind.

In this messianic spirit, we abandoned any realistic assessment of our stakes in Southeastern Asia. Nothing is more distressing in the Pentagon Papers than the apparent failure of any administration, including the present one, to recalculate the exact nature of our interest in Indochina, to consider what, in hard fact, the consequences would be for the United States of the communization of Vietnam. In retrospect, one can only feel that, if the containment of China were a problem, a strong Communist Vietnam would offer more effective resistance to Chinese pressures than any of the shoddy regimes we have sponsored in Saigon.

DEMOCRATIZING MISSION

Let's look now at the democratizing mission. The messianic component in American foreign policy was compounded by the idea of

America's regenerative mission to suffering mankind. Like collective security, this was in its original form a valuable idea. But in its original form the American mission was to reform the world by the American example, not by Americans moving into other countries and setting things straight.

Then the experience of military occupation after the second World War and especially, I think, the occupation of Japan began to strengthen American confidence in our talent for nation building. We soon supposed that we had not only the power but the wisdom to enter alien cultures and reconstruct them according to our own standards and values. Thus, Vice President Humphrey spoke in 1966 about "realizing the dream of the Great Society in the great area of Asia, not just here at home." He added:

> We ought to be excited about this challenge because here is where we can put to work some of our ideas of how a—nation building, of new concepts of education, development of local government, the improvement of the health standards of people and really the achievement and the fulfillment of social justice.

This was authentic language of American social reform. But it also represented the fatal perversion of a sound idea. It beguiled us into what may be called sentimental imperialism, the belief that we knew better than other people did what was good for them. In this process the limited policy of helping others to help themselves grew into the unlimited policy of imposing our own preferences on others; so that if the Vietnamese would not out of respect for our superior wisdom do what we thought was good for them, we were determined to make them do it out of obedience to our superior strength. The army major, standing in the rubble of Ben Tre, summed up the ultimate logic of American messianism: "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it."

ABSOLUTIST ANTI-COMMUNISM

Another factor that contributed to the propensity toward messianism was the rise of absolutist anti-communism. The delusion that America was the appointed protector of world freedom received additional impetus from the contention that world freedom was threatened by the ambitions of the centralized movement of world communism.

Let me be quite clear on this. The communism of the forties, which for purposes of precision we should call Stalinism, was not only a cruel and ugly tyranny in Soviet Russia but was also a relatively coordinated international movement. Anti-Stalinism would seem to me a moral necessity for any believer in democracy. And in the forties Stalinism was a perfectly genuine threat in Europe, not in the sense that the Red Army was likely to invade the west but in the sense that, given the economic and social disorganization of Western Europe, Communist parties might well have come to power in countries like France and Italy.

But practical resistance to Stalinism was soon enveloped by the view that Communism was a changeless, unalterable, monolithic doctrine of total discipline and total evil. This absolutist view led to the conclusion that every Communist party or state by definition must forever be the obedient instrument of the Soviet Union. It led Dean Rusk as an Assistant Secretary of State in 1951 to call the Communist regime in Peking "a colonial Russian government, a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale." It led to the illusion that guerrilla wars could not just be local insurrections in which local leadership responded to local grievances but must rather represent "wars of national liberation" organized by Moscow to test the will of the United States. Once again a rational idea underwent fatal expansion and perversion.

Moreover, though the reality of a centralized world Communist movement hardly outlived Stalin himself, indeed had begun to crumble some years before Stalin's death, the American government continued for many years to operate in terms of the old stereotype. When I served in the Kennedy Administration in the early sixties, I used to implore the State Department to stop going on about the Sino-Soviet bloc when it was abundantly evident that the Sino-Soviet bloc had ceased to exist, if indeed it ever existed. Yet people today—in some of his speeches, President Nixon himself—still talk about communism as if it were some sort of undifferentiated, centralized threat to the United States.

In the contemporary age of polycentrism, there is no longer any such thing as world Communism. A Communist takeover no longer means the automatic extention of Russian or of Chinese power. Every Communist government, every Communist party, has been set free to respond to its own national concerns and to pursue its own national interests. Diverging national interests have proved to be more powerful than common ideologies. And this, of course, greatly transforms the nature of the problem that Communist movements present to American security. Our failure to recognize the rise of polycentrism caused us to misconceive the character of a local conflict in Indochina, to inflate its importance, to misrepresent the degree of American interest in its outcome and to enter that war with a ferocity out of all proportion to its actual consequence for our national security.

Absolutist anti-Communism had another effect which should be noted here: It led to the purging from our government of those officials who best understood the phenomena of Asian Communism. A leading member of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations recently remarked to me that one reason the U.S. Government performed with so much more intelligence during the Cuban missile crisis than it did during the Indochina war was that in the case of the missile crisis it had the benefit of the counsel of men like Ambassadors Thompson, Bohlen and Harriman who knew the Soviet Union and could give sound advice about its probable purposes and reactions.

In the case of the Far East, we had no equivalent experts on China and the Government consequently operated on the basis of theories which we know to have been wildly exaggerated. Had not John Foster Dulles drummed our China experts out of the Foreign Service—and this committee recently had the opportunity to see what able and patriotic men they are—I cannot believe that we would have pursued the same policy of arrogance and blunder that got us so deep into Vietnam.

INSTITUTIONAL MESSIANISM

Institutional messianism: Ideas tend to become embodied in institutions; and the institutions often survive long after the ideas have become obsolete. In the fifties the absolutist anti-Communist philosophy took root in a group of governmental agencies—the State Department, purged by Dulles of active dissenters; the Defense Department; the National Security Council; the Central Intelligence Agency—all of which developed vested institutional interests in the theory of militarily expansionist world Communism. The cold war conferred power, appropriations and public influence on these agencies and by the natural laws of bureaucracies their concern for the care and feeding of the cold war inevitably solidified.

PROCESS OF BUREAUCRATIC AGGRANDIZEMENT

The success of CIA clandestine operations in the fifties in Iran, Guatemala, Egypt, and Laos, doubtless fed the American Government's convictions both of its ability and its right to decide the destiny of other nations. I would suggest that the very language of the cold war bureaucracies—a brisk, technocratic patois, well designed to conceal the human implications of national actions—contributed to the dehumanization of American policy and laid a spuriously antiseptic patina over the horrible things we began to do in Vietnam.

This process of bureaucratic aggrandizement began to give the executive branch of Government delusions of grandeur. Persuaded of its own exclusive grasp of these arcane matters, protected by a secrecy system to which it alone held the key, it increasingly regarded the Nation's foreign policy as its own private prerogative.

I have no doubt that historians and political scientists who had argued uncritical versions of the theory of the strong presidency—and here I must certainly include myself—contributed to these delusions; and I cannot escape the impression that Congress during most of these years amiably acquiesced in the situation almost with relief at the avoidance of responsibility.

When one reads the Pentagon papers, one notes that Congress seemed to exist in the minds of the executive branch primarily as an irritating and obtuse organism to be cajoled and hoodwinked when it could not be ignored. The notion that better consultation might have produced better policy did not seem to occur to our leaders. Yet, on the record, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has shown a good deal more wisdom about the Indochina War over the last half dozen years than the National Security Council.

ROLE OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN INDOCHINA

Of all the bureacracies, I would guess the one that played the largest role, at least in the later stages, in the intensification of our role in Indochina, was the military establishment. Historically, this military influence over foreign policy was something of a novelty. But the Second World War had brought a great military establishment into existence, the cold war made it permanent, and over the last generation this establishment has had excessive and dangerous weight in our councils of state.

For many years the military have absorbed the largest portion of the Federal budget. Defense contracts have enlisted large sections of the business community in the military effort. Congress, until recently, has given the military nearly everything it wanted. Our military leaders have conned both the executive and legislative branches of Government into building enormous installations, increasingly irrelevant in the missile age, all over the world—and have insisted that, as the price we must pay, we must do nothing to offend such spendid democratic countries as Greece, Portugal, Brazil and South Africa. They have opposed agreements designed to slow up the arms race. They forever demand new systems of offense and defense. They invoke the emotions of virility and patriotism to reinforce their importunities.

The forward role of the military has been strikingly evident in Vietnam. First, they succeeded in defining the problem in the terms stated by General Wheeler in November 1962:

> It is fashionable in some quarters to say that the problems in Southeast Asia are primarily political and economic. I do not agree. The essence of the problem in Vietnam is military.

Once unleased, the military machine established its own momentum. The institutional pressure for further escalation, the institutional desire to try out weapons, tactics and personnel, the institutional capacity for self-delusion, demonstrated most recently by General Abrams, about the prospects for military success and the existence of that light at the end of the tunnel—all this carried us further and further into the quagmire.

Let me add, though, that the military do not inevitably control American policy. They are professional men trying to do a professional job and making exactly the arguments the nature of their profession requires. Their pressure is often effective in amorphous situations and with irresolute leaders. But it is foolish to be surprised by the advice they give or to blame them for it. It is far more to the point to blame the civilian leaders who take their advice.

Let me add, too, that I am not talking about the so-called military-industrial complex. This formulation implies that the military are nothing more than stooges of American capitalism. Only an old Leninist like President Eisenhower could believe that. I am talking about the military as a quite independent factor in the formation of policy, a force in its own right operating according to its own internal imperatives and not at the bidding of American business, which had never been deeply committed to the Indochina war and in recent years has, I believe, turned predominantly against it.

ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM?

Economic imperialism? In this connection I should perhaps mention a thesis proposed in some accounts of our involvement in Vietnam—the thesis that the Indochina war was the result of the quest of American capitalism for world hegemony.

It is true that American overseas investments have grown remarkably in the postwar period, from $8.4 billion in 1945 to $78 billion in 1970. It is, of course, hard to contend that America went into Vietnam to gain markets or protect investments in a country where we have had little of either. Indeed, we have spent more money on that war than American business could hope to get out of Vietnam in a century. But the more sophisticated exponents of the economic argument offer a kind of domino thesis of their own. They say that, because defeat in Vietnam would jeopardize American markets and investments throughout the Third World, the economic necessities of an expanding capitalist order have compelled the American Government to embark on a course of ruthless counterrevolution.

Close analysis of the figures shows, however, that the dependence of American capitalism on the underdeveloped world, in terms either of trade or of investment, is very limited indeed. Two thirds of American exports go to industrialized rather than to developing countries. Sales to the Third World amount to about 3 percent of our annual national output. As for American investment in the Third World, this represents a declining fraction of our total foreign investment: 35 percent in 1960 and only 28 percent in 1970.

Of Third World investment, 40 percent is in petroleum. If this is excluded, only about one-sixth of American overseas investment is in developing nations, and few American businessmen today seem interested in increasing the proportion. Insofar as the future of American capitalism depends on the outside world, it depends on markets and investments in other industrialized countries and not on what may happen in the Third World.

Nor can it be said that the prosecution of the Indochina war was necessary for domestic prosperity. Quite the contrary. The economic consequences of Vietnam have been inflation, balance of payments trouble and a pervading distortion of the economy. Nor need the termination of the war mean depression at home. At the end of the Second World War, between 1945 and 1946, governmental purchases of goods and services declined from $83 billion to $31 billion, a sum equal to almost one-quarter of the gross national product. If our economy could absorb a decline of such magnitude then it could easily absorb a decline in war spending of about 2 percent of gross national product today.

It must be added that the Pentagon papers, so far as I know, record no instances of business intervention in American Vietnam policy and that any discussion among governmental officials of an American economic interest in southeastern Asia was glancing and perfunctory. Insofar as our government confronted the question of the American interest, it saw that interest as political, strategic and symbolic, not economic.

POSTWAR AMERICAN IMPERIAL IMPULSE

To sum up, I would suggest that the postwar American imperial impulse, which came to its terrible culmination in Indochina, arose from a number of pressures and temptations—pressures and temptations exerted by the vacuums of power created by the Second World War; by the misapplication of a valid belief in the necessity of creating an international structure in which the United States would accept her full global responsibilities; by the grandiose overextension of America's mission to uplift suffering mankind; by the reformist faith in the American capacity to instruct and rebuild other nations; by the quite real menace of Stalinist communism; by the counterideology of anti-communism, persisting in rigid and absolutist form long after the circumstances that had produced it had begun to change; and by the institutionalization of the cold war, especially in the increasingly influential military establishment.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM NOT INEVITABLE

The further question arises: did these diverse factors render our involvement in Vietnam inevitable? Were these forces shaping our policy so powerful that any Administration in Washington would have been compelled to pursue the course that was, in fact, pursued?

My answer to that is no. The Indochina tragedy was, in my judgment, the consequence of national illusions and delusions, not of national necessities. The road to disaster had many turnings.

We could, for example, have followed the policy recommended before his death by President Roosevelt and opposed the restoration of French rule in Indochina. We could have responded to the appeals of Ho Chi Minh in 1945–46. Given the urgencies incited by the Korean war, some measure of American involvement in supporting the French in the early '50s was probably hard to avoid, nor was the provision of economic assistance to South Vietnam after 1954 a necessary cause of subsequent disaster.

VIETNAM POLICY OF KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

I do not regard its Vietnam policy as one of the Kennedy administration's finest hours. In retrospect, it is clear that we all overreacted to Khrushchev's truculent speech of January 1961. This was the speech predicting the victory of Communism through "wars of national liberation in the Third World, the speech to which the Kennedy inaugural was essentially an answer.

It would now appear that Khrushchev was engaged in a complicated maneuver with regard to China; but Washington, unaware of the depth of the Sino-Soviet split at the time, interpreted the speech as a challenge to the West. The feeling in Washington then was that the nuclear standoff excluded the possibility of nuclear war, that the western response in Korea had reduced the chance of limited war, and that if a solution could only be found for guerrilla war, a future of peace might be assured.

There thus arose the counterinsurgency mystique, an interesting but dangerous idea and one which Americans were not qualified by history or temperament to carry through. At the same time, the shift in military strategy from predominant reliance on nuclear weapons to flexible response and the consequent diversification of our Armed Forces, though intended to reduce the risk of nuclear war, had the ironic effect of making possible marginal ventures like Vietnam.

I do not recall, though, any cockiness or relish in the Kennedy White House about getting involved in Vietnam. There was enough else to do in those years. Moreover, it must be remembered that President Kennedy's decision to send in advisers at the end of 1961 was in part a tradeoff to the national-security bureaucracy for its sullen acceptance of the Kennedy policy of neutralizing Laos. Kennedy rejected the recommendations of the Taylor-Rostow report for American armed intervention in 1961. Indeed, less than 100 Americans were killed in combat in Vietnam during the entire Kennedy presidency. On the other hand, he did acquiesce in 1962 in the definition of the Vietnam problem as primarily military, a definition which, it should be added, governmental officials like Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman vigorously opposed.

It seems to me fairly fruitless to speculate what would have happened had President Kennedy lived. It is impossible to predict what dead presidents would do about situations that take a new form after their death; it is hard enough to predict what living presidents will do about such situations. I suppose the safest guess as to what John Kennedy's line would have been is to look at the line taken by his brothers after his death.

There can be no question that President Kennedy had the capacity to refuse escalation. He showed that at the time of the Bay of Pigs and again at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. I know, too, that his memory of Vietnam under French rule made him feel there were limits beyond which one could expand a white military presence without uniting the energies of local nationalism against the intruder. I find it hard, God knows, to believe that Vietnam would have altered his prudent and rational habits in the use of power. But the question of what he would have done had he lived remains insoluble.

I have some remarks about the Johnson administration and about the comment that the system worked in Vietnam but, in the interest of time, I will leave that for the printed record and simply sum up my views about the question whether or not the "system" worked.

POLITICAL BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM IN WASHINGTON FAILED

In my view, the system, that is, the political bureaucratic system in Washington, failed dismally. It failed to provide any systematic and serious assessment of American stakes in Vietnam. It failed in the political and military tactics it produced. It failed in its estimate and forecast of the character of the problem and the magnitude of the difficulty. It failed to foresee the acute instability of the Diem regime, or the fiasco of the strategic hamlet program or the attacks on the Buddhists in 1963, or the futility of the bombing policy, or the failure of search-and-destroy tactics, or the capacity of the enemy year after year to replenish his losses and enlarge his effort.

It was wrong in believing that the South Vietnamese under Diem had the will to defend itself, that U.S. pressure could introduce reform into the rigid minds of Saigon mandarins that if we pounded long and hard enough the other side would cry "uncle."

It was terribly wrong in regarding Hanoi and the Viet Cong as the spearhead of Chinese aggression. The system could not even foresee developments within the Saigon regime itself. As the Pentagon study says,

> The shifts of loyalties, coups, rebellions and major changes of public figures often caught the embassy by surprise. It had no effective system, either through overt or covert contacts, for finding out what was going on.

The system, in short, did not offer presidents intelligent or useful counsel and it reinforced and compounded illusion. In my judgment, the Vietnamese adventure was marked much more by ignorance, misjudgment, muddle and, to be frank, stupidity than it was by efficiency, foresight, awareness, and calculation.

LESSONS OF VIETNAM

What are the lessons of Vietnam? To sum up very quickly, (1) that everything in the world is not of equal importance to us. For nearly a decade we have given too large a share of our attention and resources to a marginal problem on the mainland of Asia while our position has steadily deteriorated in parts of the world far more vital to our national security.

(2) That we cannot do everything in the world. Vietnam should teach us that in the last half of the 20th century armed white men cannot decide the destiny of countries in the Third World. Let us hope that it will forever chasten what your chairman has well termed the "arrogance of power."

(3) That we cannot be the permanent guarantor of stability in a world of turbulence and change. We must reconcile ourselves to an age of local revolution and local war in which many terrible things will take place that the United States simply lacks the power to prevent or the wisdom to cure.

(4) That all problems in the world are not military problems and that military force is not usually the most effective form of national power. So long as we continue to define world problems in military terms, so long will we strengthen the influence of our own military establishment and plunge the nation into further military intervention: We should undertake military intervention only (a) when the national security of the United States is directly and indisputedly involved; (b) when the people whom we think we are supporting display a capacity for resistance themselves; and (c) when, in addition, there are reasonable prospects for success—all conditions rejected and trampled upon by those who made American military policy for Vietnam.

(5) That if we must fight, we must rigorously maintain a due and rational proportion between our means and our ends. I do not much like the wholesale distribution of moral judgments in the realm of foreign policy, but I have no doubt that the Indochina war became an immoral war when we began to violate the principle of proportionality, when we began to regard technology as a substitute for policy, when the means employed and the destruction wrought grew out of any defensible relationship to the interests involved and the ends sought. We will have to live with the horror of Vietnam for the rest of our lives.

(6) Finally, that foreign policy is not the private property of the Executive Branch of government. The President must stop making decisions of war and peace without effective consultation with the American Congress. He must stop withholding information about American action and policy essential to wise and informed judgment by the Congress and the electorate. Congress must participate, as in recent years it has sadly failed to participate, in the control both of foreign policy and of the government's secrecy system.

Perhaps the lessons of Vietnam can best be summed up in the statement that President Kennedy made in November 1961, a statement which, in my belief, expressed his true views on this matter far more accurately than the grandiloquent rhetoric of the inaugural address, when he said:

We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—that we are only 6 percent of the world's population—that we cannot impose our will upon the other 94 percent of mankind—that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity—and that, therefore, there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.

Thank you.

(Dr. Schlesinger's prepared statement follows:)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR., ON THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

My name is Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. I have been since 1966 Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities at the City University of New York. From 1961 to 1964 I served as Special Assistant to President Kennedy and, briefly, to President Johnson. Though I have had other stretches of government service, I am primarily a writer and historian.

As an historian, I want first to commend the Committee for undertaking this complex and difficult inquiry. I am sure that future historians will be mystified when, looking back at the 1950s and 1960s (even the early 1970s), they try to figure out what led successive American Presidents to suppose that our national interest and security were so vitally involved in the fate of a small country on the mainland of Southeast Asia as to justify the blood, destruction, atrocity and agony for which American policy has been responsible. I have no doubt that these hearings—and any conclusions the Committee may draw—will provide material of inestimable importance for scholars in generations to come.

Let me also say at the start that there is, in my judgment, no single answer to our problem. What I will endeavor to do is disentangle what seem to one historian significant threads of thought and policy that led us to so ghastly a culmination in Southeast Asia. Limitations of time will oblige me to make my points quickly and crisply but, I hope, without undue oversimplification. I must add that I am conscious that I myself at earlier times have shared some of the illusions I will discuss today. I only wish that I had understood earlier what I think I understand now; and I certainly do not seek to exempt myself from a share, however trivial, of personal responsibility for going along with directions of policy whose implications did not become evident to me until the summer of 1965.

At the end of the Second World War, the traditional equilibrium of world power was in disarray. In the wake of war there emerged great vacuums of power—in Europe, in Asia, in Africa. At the same time, the war left only two nations with the capacity to fill those vacuums of power—America and Russia. Each came out of the war with military strength, political and ideological self-confidence and the habits of global assessment and global action.

The United States entered the post-war world with two leading convictions about its future world role: the conviction that the United States had an obligation to create and defend a global structure of peace; and the conviction that the United States had a democratizing mission to the world. These were perfectly honorable convictions. However, the pressures and temptations of the postwar situation led to the catastrophic overextension and misapplication of valid principles—a process that culminated horribly in the Indochina tragedy.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

The foreign policy of the United States since the Second World War has been in the hands of the generation which came of age between 1914, the start of the First World War, and 1953, the end of the Korean War. Every generation is the prisoner of its own experience; and for this generation the critical international experience was the defense of the peace system against one or another aggressive power. Peace, it was said, was indivisible; appeasement would only encourage aggression; aggression anywhere, if unchecked and unpunished, would threaten the independence of nations everywhere. The preservation of peace therefore required the re-establishment of the peace system through collective action against aggression by the world community.

This was the view of the world envisaged by Woodrow Wilson, the view implied by the Stimson Doctrine, the view substantiated by the failure of appeasement at Munich, the view argued by President Roosevelt during the Second World War, the view reasserted in the Truman Doctrine, the view doggedly reaffirmed by President Johnson in the sixties and, indeed, the view expressed by President Nixon in recent days as he explained his re-escalation of air attacks on North Vietnam. The United States, he said, was "destined" to play a "great role" in "helping to build a new structure of peace." The North Vietnamese offensive was "a clear case of naked and unprovoked aggression across an international border." If it succeeds, "other countries will be encouraged to do exactly the samething—in the Mideast, in Europe, and in other international danger spots. . . . If Communist aggression fails, it will discourage others to do [from doing?] the same thing."

I know that to the young discussion of international affairs in these formalistic terms seems so unreal that they presume this language must be a mask for other and unavowed motives. But it would be, I think, a mistake not to recognize that, especially for the generation that grew up under the shadow of Hitler, these words have meaning. Nor, I trust, will we as a nation abandon the objective of collective security.

Yet, as we consider Vietnam, we see that something obviously went wrong with the application of the doctrine. Some would date the beginning of the degeneration of the collective security idea with the Truman Doctrine of 1947. In a sense this was so, though I would emphasize "in a sense" because the inflation in the Truman period was in words rather than in deeds. While President Truman declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure," Truman himself was selective in the employment of this drastic proposition. He did not himself construe it in a crusading way, applying it neither to Eastern Europe nor to China as it was applied to Greece and Turkey.[1] Moreover, Truman, after carrying through the greatest demobilization in history in 1945–46, kept defense spending under tight control. In 1947–50 national-security expenditures averaged only $13 billion a year. By 1949 the Army was down to ten active divisions. This was hardly the military posture of a state bent on establishing a world empire.

The Korean War changed all that, and in the fifties the United States government began to live up to the rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine. The original collective security idea had been that clearcut acts of aggression by major states required collective intervention to restore an equilibrium of power. In the fifties this idea lost its limitations. It was subtly transformed into the doctrine that almost any form of foreign trouble, whether caused by large or small states, whether or not the elements of a balance-of-power situation existed, whether the trouble was external or internal in origin, required intervention, if necessary, by America alone. Where President Truman at first applied his Doctrine sparingly, events, especially Korea, began to generalize it. Secretary of State Dulles carried this generalization to the point of absurdity and danger, making it a systematic policy to overcommit American power and prestige all around the world. Assuming that the Soviet Union would exploit situations of local military weakness everywhere, Dulles concluded that aggression could be restrained only if such situations were shored up at every point by visible military force. He sought to do this by setting up NATO-like alliances in the Third World. And he charged this idea with a righteous moralism that encouraged the American people to construe political questions in ethical terms, local questions in global terms and relative questions in absolute terms.

The success of communism anywhere, Dulles felt, would put in question the will and power of the United States everywhere. It was in this mood that, having supported the French in Indochina in the years after 1948, we began to replace the French after 1954. The National Security Council had already in early 1952 declared that "communist domination, by whatever means, of all Southeast Asia would seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, United States security interests." The reason for this, in the NSC view, was what would later be termed the domino effect: "the loss of any single country would probably lead to relatively swift submission . . . by the remaining countries of this group." This remained the perspective in which the American government saw Vietnam. As President Eisenhower summed up the situation on April 4, 1959, "The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us. . . . We reach the inescapable conclusion that our own national interests demand some help from us in sustaining in Vietnam the morale, the economic progress, and the military strength necessary to its continued existence in freedom."

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[1] Indeed, the recent Nixon-Chou En-Lai communiqué, in pronouncing Formosa a part of mainland China, did not go so far as the Truman statement of January 1950 which added that the United States would remain neutral even if the Chinese Communists sought to take the island by force.

If it was hard to argue that the threat presented by the Viet Cong and Ho Chi Minh was comparable to the threat presented by Hitler in the thirties, our government responded by inflating the threat and contending that our adversaries in Vietnam actually constituted the spearhead of a planned Chinese system of expansion in East Asia. This was the NSC view in the early fifties. President Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs that the conflict "began gradually, with Chinese intervention, to assume its true complexion of a struggle between Communism and non-Communists forces rather than one between a colonial power and colonists who were intent on attaining independence." By 1967 Vice President Humphrey could cry: "The threat to world peace is militant aggressive Asian communism, with its headquarters in Peking, China. . . . The aggression of North Vietnam is but the most current and immediate action of militant Asian communism."

As he left the White House, President Eisenhower told President-elect Kennedy that, if the United States could not persuade other nations to join in saving Laos from communism, then it should be ready "as a last desperate hope, to intervene unilaterally." This further notion—the notion that America, as the peculiar and appointed guardian of world peace, was entitled to act militarily on its own—represented the final and fatal perversion of the original doctrine of collective security. Soon President Kennedy was saying in his inaugural address that Americans "shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty." Four years later President Johnson said, "History and our own achievements have thrust upon us the principal responsibility for protection of freedom on earth." By now a useful and limited idea had been corrupted by messianism, and America was assuming a role as judge, jury and executioner for all mankind.

In this messianic spirit, we abandoned any realistic assessment of our stakes in Southeast Asia. Nothing is more distressing in the Pentagon Papers than the apparent failure of any administration, including the present one, to recalculate the exact nature of our interest in Indochina—to consider what, in hard fact, the consequences would be for the United States of the communization of Vietnam. In retrospect, one can only feel that, if the containment of China were a problem, a strong communist Vietnam would offer more effective resistance to Chinese pressures than any of the shoddy regimes we have sponsored in Saigon.

THE DEMOCRATIZING MISSION

The messianic component in American foreign policy was compounded by the idea of America's regenerative mission to suffering mankind. Like collective security, this was in its original form a valuable idea. But in its original form the American mission was to reform the world by the American example, not by Americans moving into other countries and setting things straight.

Then the experience of military occupation after the Second World War, and especially, I think, the occupation of Japan began to strengthen American confidence in our talent for "nation-building." We soon supposed that we had not only the power but the wisdom to enter alien cultures and reconstruct them according to our own standards and values. Thus Vice President Humphrey spoke in 1966 about "realizing the dream of the Great Society in the great area of Asia, not just here at home." He added, "We ought to be excited about this challenge, because here is where we can put to work some of our ideas of how a—nation building, of new concepts of education, development of local government, the improvement of the health standards of people, and really the achievement and the fulfillment of social justice."

This was the authentic language of American social reform. But it also represented the fatal perversion of a sound idea. It beguiled us into what may be called sentimental imperialism—the belief that we know better than other people did what was good for them. In this process the limited policy of helping others to help themselves grew into the unlimited policy of imposing our own preferences on others; to that, if the Vietnamese would not out of respect for our superior wisdom do what we thought was good for them, we were determined to make them do it out of obedience to our superior strength. The Army major standing in the rubble of Ben Tre summed up the ultimate logic of American messianism: "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it."

ABSOLUTIST ANTI-COMMUNIST

The delusion that America was the appointed protector of world freedom received additional impetus from the conviction that world freedom was threatened by the ambitions of the centralized movement of world communism. Let me be quite clear on this. The communism of the forties—which for purposes of precision we should call Stalinism—was not only a cruel and ugly tyranny in Soviet Russia but was also a relatively coordinated international movement. Anti-Stalinism would seem to me a moral necessity for any believer in democracy. And in the forties Stalinism was a perfectly genuine threat in Europe—not in the sense that the Red Army was likely to invade the west, but in the sense that, given the economic and social disorganization of Western Europe, Communist parties might well have come to power in countries like France and Italy.

But practical resistance to Stalinism was soon enveloped by the view that communism was a changeless, unalterable, monolithic doctrine of total discipline and total evil. This absolutist view led to the conclusion that every communist party or state by definition must forever be the obedient instrument of the Soviet Union. It led Dean Rusk as an Assistant Secretary of State in 1951 to call the communist regime in Peking "a colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale." It led to the illusion that guerrilla wars could not just be local insurrections in which local leadership responded to local grievances but must rather represent "wars of national liberation" organized by Moscow to "test the will" of the United States. Once again a rational idea underwent fatal expansion and perversion.

Moreover, though the reality of a centralized world communist movement hardly outlived Stalin himself—indeed, had begun to crumble some years before Stalin's death—the American government continued for many years to operate in terms of the old stereotype. When I served in the Kennedy administration in the early sixties, I used to implore the State Department to stop going on about the "Sino-Soviet bloc" when it was abundantly evident that the Sino-Soviet bloc had ceased to exist, if indeed it ever existed. Yet people today—in some of his speeches, President Nixon himself—still talk about communism as if it were some sort of undifferentiated, centralized threat to the United States.

In the contemporary age of polycentrism, there is no longer any such thing as "world communism." A communist takeover no longer means the automatic extension of Russian or of Chinese power. Every communist government, every communist party, has been set free to respond to its own national concerns and to pursue its own national interests. Diverging national interests have proved to be more powerful than common ideologies. And this, of course, greatly transforms the nature of the problem that communist movements present to American security. Our failure to recognize the rise of polycentrism caused us to misconceive the character of a local conflict in Indochina, to inflate its importance, to misrepresent the degree of American interest in its outcome and to enter that war with a ferocity out of all proportion to its actual consequence for our national security.

Absolutist anti-communism had another effect which should be noted here: it led to the purging from our government of those officials who best understood the penomena of Asian communism. A leading member of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations recently remarked to me that one reason the United States government performed with so much more intelligence during the Cuban missile crisis than it did during the Indochina war was that in the case of the missile crisis it had the benefit of the counsel of men like Ambassadors Thompson, Bohlen and Harriman who knew the Soviet Union and could give sound advice about its probable purposes and reactions. In the case of the Far East, we had no equivalent experts on China, and the government consequently operated on the basis of theories which we now know to have been wildly exaggerated. Had not John Foster Dulles drummed our China experts out of the Foreign Service—and this Committee recently had the opportunity to see what able and patriotic men they are—I cannot believe that we would have pursued the same policy of arrogance and blunder that got us so deep into Vietnam.

INSTITUTIONAL MESSIANISM

Ideas tend to become embodied in institutions; and the institutions often survive long after the ideas have become obsolete. In the fifties the absolutist anti-communist philosophy took root in a group of government agencies—the State Department, purged by Dulles of active dissenters, the Defense Department, the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency—all of which developed vested institutional interests in the theory of militarily expansionist world communism. The Cold War conferred power, appropriations and public influence on these agencies; and, by the natural laws of bureaucracies, their concerns for the care and feeding of the Cold War inevitably solidified. The success of CIA clandestine operations in the fifties—in Iran, Guatemala, Egypt, Laos—doubtless fed the American government's conviction both of its ability and its right to decide the destiny of other nations. I would suggest that the very language of the Cold War bureaucracies—a brisk technocratic patois, well designed to conceal the human implications of national actions—contributed to the dehumanization of American policy and laid a spuriously antiseptic patina over the horrible things we began to do in Indochina.

This process of bureaucratic aggrandizement began to give the executive branch of government delusions of grandeur. Persuaded of its own exclusive grasp of these arcane matters, protected by a secrecy system to which it alone held the key, it increasingly regarded the nation's foreign policy as its own private prerogative. I have no doubt that historians and political scientists who had argued uncritical versions of the theory of the strong Presidency—and here I must certainly include myself—contributed to these delusions; and I cannot escape the impression that Congress during most of these years amiably acquiesced in the situation almost with relief at the avoidance of responsibility. When one reads the Pentagon Papers, one notes that Congress seemed to exist in the minds of the executive branch primarily as an irritating and obtuse organism to be cajoled and hoodwinked when it could not be ignored. The notion that better consultation might have produced better policy did not seem to occur to our leaders. Yet, on the record, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has shown a good deal more wisdom about the Indochina War over the last half dozen years than the National Security Council.

Of all the bureaucracies, I would guess the one that played the largest role, at least in the later stages, in the intensification of our role in Indochina was the military establishment. Historically this military influence over foreign policy was something of a novelty. But the Second World War had brought a great military establishment into existence, the Cold War made it permanent, and over the last generation this establishment has had excessive and dangerous weight in our councils of state. For many years the military have absorbed the largest portion of the federal budget. Defense contracts have enlisted large sections of the business community in the military effort. Congress, until recently, has given the military nearly everything it wanted. Our military leaders have conned both the executive and legislative branches of government into building enormous installations, increasingly irrelevant in the missile age, all over the world (and have insisted that, as the price we must pay, we must do nothing to offend such splendid democratic countries as Greece, Portugal, Brazil and South Africa). They have opposed agreements designed to slow up the race. They forever demand new systems of offense and defense. They invoke the emotions of virility and patriotism to reinforce their importunities.

The forward role of the military has been strikingly evident in Vietnam. First they succeeded in defining the problem in the terms stated by General Wheeler in November 1962: "It is fashionable in some quarters to say that the problems in Southeast Asia are primarily political and economic. . . . I do not agree. The essence of the problem in Vietnam is military." Once unleashed, the military machine established its own momentum. The institutional pressure for further escalation, the institutional desire to try out weapons, tactics and personnel, the institutional capacity for self-delusion, demonstrated most recently by General Abrams, about the prospects for military success and the existence of that light at the end of the tunnel—all this carried us further and further into the quagmire.

Let me add, though, that the military do not inevitably control American policy. They are professional men trying to do a professional job and making exactly the arguments the nature of their profession requires. Their pleasure is often effective in amorphous situations and with irresolute leaders. But it is foolish to be surprised by the advice they give or to blame them for it. It is far more to the point to blame the civilian leaders who take their advice.

Let me add too that I am not talking about the so-called "military-industrial complex." This formulation implies that the military are nothing more than stooges of American capitalism. Only an old Leninist like President Eisenhower could believe that. I am talking about the military as a quite independent factor in the formation of policy, a force in its own right operating according to its own internal imperatives and not at the bidding of American business, which had never been deeply committed to the Indochina war and in recent years has, I believe, turned predominantly against it.

ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM?

In this connection, I should perhaps mention a thesis proposed in some accounts of our involvement in Vietnam: the thesis that the Indochina war was the result of the quest of American capitalism for world hegemony.

It is true that American overseas investments have grown remarkably in the postwar period—from $8.4 billion in 1945 to $78 billion in 1970. It is, of course, hard to contend that America went into Vietnam to gain markets or protect investments in a country where we have had little of either. Indeed, we have spent more money on that war than American business could hope to get out of Vietnam in a century. But the more sophisticated exponents of the economic argument offer a kind of domino thesis of their own. They say that, because defeat in Vietnam would jeopardize American markets and investments throughout the Third World, the economic necessities of an expanding capitalist order have compelled the American government to embark on a course of ruthless counter-revolution.

Close analysis of the figures shows, however, that the dependence of American capitalism on the underdeveloped world, in terms either of trade or of investment, is very limited indeed. Two-thirds of American exports go to industrialized rather than to developing countries; sales to the Third World amount to about 3 per cent of our annual national output. As for American investment in the Third World, this represents a declining fraction of our total foreign investment—35 per cent in 1960 and only 28 per cent in 1970. Of Third World investment, 40 per cent is in petroleum; if this is excluded, only about one-sixth of American overseas investment is in developing nations, and few American businessmen seem interested in increasing the proportion. In so far as the future of American capitalism depends on the outside world, it depends on markets and investments in other industrialized countries and not on what may happen in the Third World.

Nor can it be said that the prosecution of the Indochina war was necessary for dometic prosperity. Quite the contrary: the economic consequences of Vietnam have been inflation, balance-of-payments trouble and a pervading distortion of the economy. Nor need the termination of the war mean depression at home. At the end of the Second Wold War, between 1945 and 1946, government purchases of goods and services declined from $83 billion to $31 billion, a sum equal to almost one-quarter of the gross national product. If our economy could absorb a decline of such magnitude then, it could easily absorb a decline in war spending of about 2 per cent of gross national product today.

It must be added that the Pentagon Papers, so far as I know, record no instance of business intervention in American Vietnam policy and that any discussion among government officials of an American economic interest in Southeast Asia was glancing and perfunctory. In so far as our government confronted the question of the American interest, it saw that interest as political, strategic and symbolic, not economic.

To sum up, I would suggest that the post-war American imperial impulse, which came to its terrible culmination in Indochina, arose from a number of pressures and temptations—pressures and temptations exerted by the vacuums of power created by the Second World War; by the misapplication of a valid belief in the necessity of creating an international structure in which the United States would accept her full global responsibilities; by the grandiose over-extension of America's mission to uplift suffering mankind; by the reformist faith in the American capacity to instruct and rebuild other nations; by the quite real menace of Stalinist communism; by the counterideology of anti-communism, persisting in rigid and absolutist form long after the circumstances that had produced it had begun to change; and by the institutionalization of the Cold War, especially in the increasingly influential military establishment.

The further question arises: did these diverse factors render our involvement in Vietnam inevitable? Were these forces shaping our policy so powerful that any administration in Washington would have been compelled to pursue the course that was, in fact, pursued? My answer to that is no. The Indochina tragedy was, in my judgment, the consequence of national illusions and delusions, not of national necessities. The road to disaster had many turnings.

We could, for example, have followed the policy recommended before his death by President Roosevelt and opposed the restoration of French rule in Indochina. We could have responded to the appeals of Ho Chi Minh in 1945–46. Given the urgencies incited by the Korean War, some measure of American involvement in supporting the French in the early fifties was probably hard to avoid; nor was the provision of economic assistance to South Vietnam after 1954 a necessary cause of subsequent disaster.

I do not regard its Vietnam policy as one of the Kennedy administration's finest hours. In retrospect, it is clear that we all overreacted to Khruschev's truculent speech of January 1961. This was the speech predicting the victory of communism through "wars of national liberation" in the Third World—the speech to which the Kennedy inaugural was essentially an answer. It would now appear that Khrushchev was engaged in a complicated maneuver with regard to China; but Washington, unaware of the depth of the Sino-Soviet split at the time, interpreted the speech has a challenge to the west. The feeling in Washington then was that the nuclear stand-off excluded the possibility of nuclear war; that the western response in Korea had reduced the chance of limited war; and that, if a solution could only be found for guerrilla war, a future of peace might be assured. There thus arose the counterinsurgency mystique—an interesting but dangerous idea and one which Americans were not qualified by history or temperament to carry through. At the same time, the shift in military strategy from predominant reliance on nuclear weapons to 'flexible response' and the consequent diversification of our armed forces, though intended to reduce the risk of nuclear war, had the ironic effect of making possible marginal ventures like Vietnam.

I do not recall, though, any cockiness or relish in the Kennedy White House about getting involved in Vietnam. There was enough else to do in those years. Moreover, it must be remembered that President Kennedy's decision to send in "advisers" at the end of 1961 was in part a trade-off to the national-security bureaucracy for its sullen acceptance of the Kennedy policy of neutralizing Laos, Kennedy rejected the recommendations of the Taylor-Rostow report for American armed intervention in 1961. Indeed, less than 100 American were killed in combat in Vietnam during the entire Kennedy Presidency. On the other hand. he did acquiesce in 1962 in the definition of the Vietnam problem as primarily military—a definition which, it should be added, government officials like Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman vigorously opposed.

It seems to me fairly fruitless to speculate what would have happened had President Kennedy lived. It is impossible to predict what dead Presidents would do about situations that take a new form after their death; it is hard enough to predict what living Presidents will do about such situations. I suppose the safest guess as to what John Kennedy's would have been is to look at the line taken by his brothers after his death. There can be no question that President Kennedy had the capacity to refuse escalation. He showed that at the time of the Bay of Pigs and again at the time of the Cuba missile crisis. I know too that his memory of Vietnam under French rule made him feel there were limits beyond which one could expand a white military presence without uniting the energies of local nationalism against the intruder. I find it hard to believe that Vietnam would have altered his prudent and rational habits in the use of power. But the question of what he would have done had he lived remains insoluable.

The most disastrous step was the decision in 1965 to send American bombers to North Vietnam and American combat troops into South Vietnam. Did previous events leave President Johnson no alternative but to Americanize the Vietnam war? I do not think that history is so meticulously determined. I believe that President Johnson genuinely thought—though, in my belief, mistakenly—that the future of world peace was bound up with American success in Vietnam; in addition he found it inconceivable that, if American power and technology were applied, the problem could not be solved. Nor would I underestimate his belief that failure in Vietnam might lead to a dangerous political backlash in America:

his generation had too vivid memory of the campaign against the Truman administration for having "lost" China. But I do not believe that any other group in office in Washington at that time would be ineluctably compelled to do what the Johnson administration did—any more than another administration in Washington today would be ineluctably compelled to the irrational course recently announced by President Nixon.

Let me deal briefly with the contentions submitted by astute observers that in some sense the system—that is, our politico-bureaucratic system—"worked" in the development of American policy in Vietnam. This contention has been based on three propositions.

The first is that we could not afford to lose in Vietnam because of dangerous repercussions, both international and domestic. This was, it seems to me, a general mood rather than an absolute point. President Truman thought that not losing in Vietnam was worth the 40 per cent cost of the war the United States was paying by 1951. President Eisenhower thought it worth the 80 per cent cost of 1954 plus the $200 million per year of military aid from 1955 to 1961. President Kennedy thought it worth further aid plus the sending of 16,000 advisers. But I am sure that if these Presidents had anticipated that the eventual cost would be 540,000 American troops in Vietnam, $30 billion a year, extensive destruction and slaughter and then, in the end, military stalemate, they would not have thought the game to be worth the candle. The question of "not affording to lose" is not an absolute question; it is surely relative to the costs of preventing such loss.

This leads to the second proposition—that our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory but always wanted a negotiated settlement. I am constrained to doubt this. In November 1961, for example, there were 15,000 Viet Cong against 250,000 troops of the Saigon government. It might well have seemed reasonable—and indeed did seem reasonable—to suppose that ARVN, stiffened by American weapons and advisers, could deal with this small and ragged opposition. After all, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told President Kennedy in the autumn of 1961 that 40,000 American troops could clean up the Viet Cong; and that, if there were North Vietnamese plus Chinese intervention, 128,000 more American troops could take care of that.

In 1965, when we began the Americanization of the war, Presdent Johnson, I am sure, could not conceive that, if we pounded North Vietnam long enough, there would not be a breaking-point; that, if the greatest power in the world applied itsellf, we could not nail the coonskin to the wall. Up till very recently, and perhaps even now, the military have conceived the war to be winnable, in the sense of assuring the survival of a non-communist regime in Saigon. As for a negotiated settlement, this was not an issue for the first three Presidents involved; and the last two have not sought a negotiated settlement except on terms that would, in effect, assure the survival of the Saigon government—terms that the other side would be bound as a dusty answer after a generation of struggle.

The third proposition is that our Presidents were not deluded by optimism and did not expect military success. This question took different shapes in different administrations. For a good deal of the time, both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy supposed that ARVN could hold its own, and President Johnson certainly expected success in 1965–66. Mr. Gelb himself has written, "By most conventional standards—the size and firepower of friendly Vietnamese forces, the number of hamlets pacified, the number of 'free elections' being held, the number of Communists killed, and so forth—reasonable men could and did think in cautiously optimistic terms." Certainly each President was offered pessimistic advice, especially by the CIA, but he was also offered plenty of optimistic advice too. The record shows pessimism and optimism so hopelessly intermingled that any President could draw almost any conclusions his temperament and intelligence enjoined him to draw.

In my view the "system" failed dismally. It failed to provide any systematic and serious assessment of American stakes in Vietnam. It failed in the political and military tactics it produced. It failed in its estimate and forecast of the character of the problem and the magnitude of the difficulty. It failed to foresee the acute instability of the Diem regime, or the fiasco of the strategic hamlet program, or the attacks on the Buddhists in 1963, or the futility of the bombing policy, or the failure of search-and-destroy tactics, or the capacity of the enemy, year after year, to replenish his losses and enlarge his effort. It was wrong in believing that the South Vietnamese under Diem had the will to defend itself; that United States pressure could introduce reform into the rigid minds of Saigon mandarins; that, if we pounded long and hard enough, the other side would cry uncle. It was terribly wrong in regarding Hanoi and Viet Cong as the spearhead of Chinese aggression. The system could not even foresee developments within the Saigon regime itself. As the Pentagon study says, "The shifts of loyalties, coups, rebellions, and major changes of public figures, often caught the Embassy by surprise. It had no effective system, either through overt or covert contacts, for finding out what was going on."

The system, in short, did not offer Presidents intelligent or useful counsel; and it reinforced and compounded illusion. In my judgment, the Vietnam adventure was marked much more by ignorance, misjudgment, muddle and (to be frank) stupidity than it was by efficiency, foresight, awareness and calculation.

What are the lessons of Vietnam?

(1) *That everything in the world is not of equal importance to us.* For nearly a decade we have given too large a share of our attention and resources to a marginal problem on the mainland of Asia while our position has steadily deteriorated in parts of the world far more vital to our national security.

(2) *That we cannot do everything in the world.* Vietnam should teach us that in the last half of the 20th century armed white men cannot decide the destiny of countries in the Third World. Let us hope that it will forever chasten what your chairman has well termed the "arrogance of power."

(3) *That we cannot be the permanent guarantor of stability in a world of turbulence and change.* We must reconcile ourselves to an age of local revolution and local war in which many terrible things will take place that the United States simply lacks the power to prevent or the wisdom to cure.

(4) *That all problems in the world are not military problems, and that military force is not usually the most effective form of national power.* So long as we continue to define world problems in military terms, so long will we strengthen the influence of our own military establishment and plunge the nation into further military intervention. We should undertake military intervention only (a) when the national security of the United States is directly and indisputably involved; (b) when the people whom we thing we are supporting display a capacity for resistance themselves; and (c) when, in addition, there are reasonable prospects for success—all conditions rejected and trampled upon by those who made American military policy for Vietnam.

(5) *That, if we must fight, we must rigorously maintain a due and rational proportion between our means and our ends.* I do not much like the wholesale distribution of moral judgments in the realm of foreign policy; but I have no doubt that the Indochina war became an immoral war when we began to violate the principle of proportionality, when we began to regard technology as a substitute for policy, when the means employed and the destruction wrought grew out of any defensible relationship to the interests involved and the ends sought. We will have to live with the horror of Vietnam for the rest of our lives.

(6) *That foreign policy is not the private property of the executive branch of government.* The President must stop making decisions of war and peace without effective consultation with the American Congress. He must stop withholding information about American action and policy essential to wise and informed judgment by the Congress and the electorate. Congress must participate, as in recent years it has sadly failed to participate, in the control both of foreign policy and of the government's secrecy system.

Perhaps the lessons of Vietnam can best be summed up in the statement that President Kennedy made in November 1961—a statement which, in my belief, expressed his true views on this matter far more accurately than the grandiloquent rhetoric of the inaugural address:

"We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—that we are only six per cent of the world's population—that we cannot impose our will upon the other ninety-four per cent of mankind—that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity—and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem."

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Dr. Schlesinger. That is a very perceptive and a very interesting statement. We will return to questions on it when we hear from Dr. Chomsky.

Dr. Chomsky, would you like to give us your statement at this time?

STATEMENT OF NOAM CHOMSKY, FERRARI P. WARD PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, my statement is also much too long to read, I am afraid, and I will just therefore mention a few of the main points and, if I may, I would also like to comment on some of the events that have taken place since I submitted this statement last week, which I think are very ominous and relate to a number of the points that I made in the statement.

U.S. POLICY OF IMPOSING NON-COMMUNIST REGIME ON VIETNAM

In September 1948, the State Department issued a policy statement in which it defined a dilemma that faced U.S. policymakers. The U.S. long-term objective was to eliminate Communist influence in Indochina to the maximum extent possible and bring Indochina within the western orbit. But the statement reported that the Communists had captured control of the nationalist movement, that Ho Chi Minh was the strongest and perhaps the ablest figure in Indochina, and that any suggested solution which excludes him is an expedient of uncertain outcome. Hence a dilemma.

The CHAIRMAN. Was that 1948?

Mr. CHOMSKY. September 1948. It was in this context that Dean Acheson on May 10, 1949, cabled to American officials in Saigon and Paris that "no effort should be spared" to assure the success of the Bao Dai government, since there appeared to be "no other alternative to establishment Commie pattern Vietnam."

He further urged that this government should be "truly representative even to extent including outstanding non-Commie leaders now supporting Ho." In other words, he had formulated what has ever since been the American policy of imposing a non-Communist regime on Vietnam—later South Vietnam.

He also said in May 1949, that the United States should recognize the French-imposed government as soon as circumstances permit.

This dilemma has always remained. The United States has been committed to a non-Communist Vietnam, by about 1960 a non-Communist South Vietnam, but the western imposed regimes were never able to compete politically with the Viet Minh and then with the NLF.

VIET CONG CAPTURED NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

Leslie Gelb summarizes the situation at the very end of the period covered in the Pentagon Papers in almost the same words as those of the State Department policy statement of 1948. He says that the Viet Cong have captured the nationalist movement and that the government of Vietnam is in effect a government of French collaborators, which is quite accurate.

One can take national intelligence estimates from the French period, for example, 1953, and interchange them with only a few changes of names with the rather despairing report of American pacification experts on, say, December 31, 1967. I give references in my statement.

STRATEGY OF ANNIHILATION UNDERTAKEN BY U.S. FORCES

There are a number of consequences to this dilemma. The first consequence is the strategy of annihilation that was undertaken by U.S. forces, in a sense, out of military necessity—that is, there was no other way to eliminate a powerful political force.

It is important to bear in mind that the main thrust of the American military effort has always been against South Vietnam, specifically against the rural society of South Vietnam. Were we capable of applying to ourselves the standards we rightly apply to others, we would say the United States has been at war with South Vietnam, in effect. It was necessary to destroy the society, the rural society, in which the Communist-led revolution was rooted.

It was necessary, as pacification adviser Robert Komer once said, to "grind the enemy down by sheer weight and mass," bearing in mind that the enemy was in effect the rural population of South Vietnam. This dilemma is the root cause of those military measures that have caused such revulsion in the United States and abroad—the crop destruction; the deliberate refugee generation, as suggested by Mr. Komer; the Phoenix program; the destruction of villages; the whole panoply of horrors that you are all familiar with.

This political weakness of the American-imposed regime was always quite clearly understood by experts in and out of governments. Bernard Fall pointed out about 10 years ago that—

> It takes all the technical proficiency our system can provide to make up for the woeful lack of popular support and political savvy of most of the regimes that the West has thus far sought to prop up.

The Americans, he said, are now coming to appreciate this in South Vietnam.

Perhaps a more interesting example is an internal memorandum by John Paul Vann who was Field Operations Coordinator of the U.S. Operations Mission at the time and has been for many years a chief American adviser in so-called "pacification."

GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM HAS NO POPULAR POLITICAL BASE

In this 1965 memorandum Vann states that the government of Vietnam has no popular political base, that it is oriented toward the exploitation of the rural and lower class urban population, that it is in effect a continuation of the French colonial system, that there is a social revolution underway largely identified with the National Liberation Front. And he went on to speak approvingly of this social revolution. From these observations, which I believe were quite accurate, he drew the conclusion that the U.S. must take over and impose a non-Communist regime.

One could add many other sources in and out of the Pentagon Papers. Time being short, I will not.

The fact of the matter is, the "Government of Vietnam" was never able to compete politically. It always recognized this; American advisers always understood this. If we look at its composition we can see why it cannot compete politically today. Thieu, Ky and Khiem.

like most of the ARVN top command, served with the French in the battle against the independence of their own country. This is in effect a Quisling regime; it is a regime of the wealthy and the corrupt; no one will fight for it. The ARVN collapse last week is a good example.

U.S. OPPOSITION TO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

A further consequence of the dilemma noted in 1948 is that the United States has always opposed a political settlement in South Vietnam, or in Vietnam altogether.

The Communist strategy, as clearly specified in the Pentagon Papers record by American intelligence and many others, has always been in South Vietnam a strategy of neutralism, a coalition regime with Communist participation in which they felt quite confident they could come out on top—perhaps correctly. The U.S. has always regarded this as a trap, just as the State Department in 1961 described the all Vietnam elections provision of the Geneva Accords as a "well-laid trap" that the U.S.-backed regime was able to evade.

Communist participation, it was always assumed, would lead to a Communist takeover. The reason, often unspoken, sometimes said explicitly, is, of course, the political strength of the National Liberation Front as opposed to the western-imposed regimes.

Just today, May 10, I notice in the newspapers that Henry Kissinger, with characteristic clarity, has made in effect exactly the same point in a news conference yesterday. He said, according to the correspondent's report, that the formation of what in effect, if not name, would be a coalition government in Saigon was proposed by the other side, then following it, a ceasefire, then negotiations to give a final political solution, with the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Quoting Mr. Kissinger:

> "That is what we have rejected. That is what we call the imposition, under the thinnest veneer of a Communist government . . . That is the only issue on which negotiations have broken down.

Assuming the quotes to be accurate, this is simply a very clear and explicit statement of the refusal of political accommodation which has always been a main feature of American policy, for perfectly obvious reasons.

In November, 1964, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor argued that even if we could establish an effective regime in Saigon, to attain American objectives, it would not suffice to "drive the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) out of its reinforcing role." Rather, he said, we will not succeed unless we also "obtain its cooperation in bringing an end to the Viet Cong insurgency." We must, he said, "persuade or force the DRV to stop its aid to the Viet Cong and to use its directive powers to make the Viet Cong desist . . ."

If we replace the phrase "DRV" by the phrase "USSR" in that statement, you have in effect the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy of today.

PARALLEL BETWEEN 1965 AND 1972

In 1965 the indigenous National Liberation Front had won; therefore, the United States shifted to a larger war. It undertook the bombing of all the Vietnam, primarily South Vietnam. It invaded

South Vietnam to destroy the forces of the National Liberation Front. Its effort, according to Ambassador Taylor and many others, was to try to force the DRV to make the Viet Cong desist. Instead, as we know, we drew the DRV into the war. Well, that was 1965.

In 1972 there was a remarkable parallel. Again, the enemy, in this case—after the 7 years of American invasion—the DRV and the PRG, the "enemy," has apparently won once again and Nixon is again shifting to a still broader, global confrontation in which he hopes to prevail. He wants the U.S.S.R. to stop supporting the DRV and the PRG, to cooperate with him to impose certain constraints on the DRV, as Mr. Kissinger suggested yesterday, to permit him in short to achieve his objective of a non-Communist South Vietnam, the U.S. objective since the 1940's; and it appears that he is willing to risk nuclear war to achieve this goal.

Whether the U.S.S.R. and China will cooperate or whether they will respond as the DRV did in 1965, I, of course, cannot predict. Nor can one predict whether another U.S. Administration will intensify the destruction of Indochina within the context of a widened, heightened confrontation, as was the case in 1965.

CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL WEAKNESS OF U.S. POSITION IN VIETNAM

The treat of nuclear war has always been inherent in the logic of the American position in Vietnam. The political weakness of the American-imposed regimes forced us continually to widen and intensify the conflict with risks that were always appreciated.

To give a few examples, on November 8, 1964, in the midst of the planning for the escalation of the following February, a NSC (National Security Council) working group concluded that the commitment to maintain a non-Communist South Vietnam would involve high risk of a major conflict in Asia, almost inevitably leading to a Korea-scale ground action and possibly the use by the United States of nuclear weapons.

About a year later, December 1965, the intelligence community estimated at almost 50–50 the probability that China would intervene if the war was significantly escalated. It recommended bombing escalation, with the exception of State's INR. The intervention of China was always understood as the trigger for nuclear war. Of course, I don't know what is happening now but I would suppose that intelligence is estimating the risk of nuclear war today as being substantial, exactly as it did during the missile crisis of 1962 where the risks of nuclear war, according to reports by Theodore Sorensen and others, were estimated as being a third to a half.

Even if the present situation stabilizes short of an international war, we will be driven to the same confrontation again and again. Dean Acheson pointed out years ago, in 1950, that the French must overcome the opposition of the indigenous population. Little has changed since then, apart from the level of destruction and the danger of great power conflict.

There are further consequences of the political weakness of the U.S. position in Vietnam. One is the long and depressing record of deceit. Dean Acheson was forced to try to present the Viet Minh as aggressors, as agents of an international conspiracy, and to claim that the

French and the Bao Dai regime were defending the territorial integrity of Indochina.

In one form or another, we have been hearing the same kind of story ever since. I need not review the sorry record. Some details are in my statement, including examples of what I take to be some very serious misrepresentations before this committee with regard to DRV troops in South Vietnam.

A further consequence of the weakness of the American political position has been the contempt for American legal obligations and, again, I give a series of examples through the 1950's and 1960's in my statement and I will omit them in the interest of time.

POSITIONS IN DEBATE OVER WAR

To a large extent, the debate over the war counterposes the optimists, who believe that with persistence we can win, to the pessimists, who argue that the U.S. cannot, at reasonable cost, guarantee the rule of the regime of its choice in South Vietnam. This opposition between the optimists and the pessimists appears as well in the first of the Nixon-Kissinger papers released by the Washington Post a few days ago. The optimists felt that we could win in 8.3 years from early 1968; and the pessimists felt that it would take, I believe, 13.4 years to beat the Vietnamese into submission.

There is a third position which, unfortunately, is barely represented in policy making so far as the documentary record indicates, namely, that the U.S. executive should abide by the supreme law of the land and refrain from forceful intervention in the internal affairs of others.

OBLIGATIONS OF U.S. UNDER U.N. CHARTER

It appears that successive administrations believed that Vietnam was the victim of a Kremlin-directed conspiracy in 1949 and 1950, that there was aggression from the north a decade later, and so on. They had the legal authority to express these beliefs and to appeal to the Security Council of the U.N. to determine the existence of a threat to peace. That they did not do so is self-explanatory. Internal documents now make it evident they never intended to live up to the obligations of the U.S. under the U.N. charter.

The U.S. executive had no authority to back French colonialism, to impose a terroristic regime, or even a benevolent democracy, on the South Vietnamese, to engage in clandestine war throughout Indochina, or to carry out a fullscale invasion of South Vietnam in 1965, demolishing the peasant society, or to wipe out the Plain of Jars and much of rural Cambodia under President Nixon, or to bomb Haiphong, or to carry out any of the other actions that have led to mass revulsion in this country and throughout much of the world.

Had the U.S. executive been strictly bound by its legal obligations, which, in my opinion, do express reasonable principles of international behavior, we would never have found ourselves in the Indochina war.

U.S. PURSUIT OF PERCEIVED SELF-INTEREST

Well, I would like to make a few comments on the question of why the U.S. became so deeply engaged in this war, particularly in the earlier period.

I think that by 1965, as John McNaughton once said at that time, the question becomes academic; we were there. Period. We had to win. But in the early period the documentary record now available in the Pentagon papers, particularly books 8 through 10 of the Government edition of the Pentagon papers, presents a fairly explicit, rather detailed account of rational, if cynical, pursuit of perceived self-interest. The straight forward major argument, continually reiterated, is that the United States has strategic and economic interests in Southeast Asia that must be secured; holding Indochina is essential for securing these interests; therefore, we must hold Indochina.

A critical consideration throughout—this, incidentally, runs throughout the midsixties—was Japan, which will eventually accommodate to the "Soviet bloc" if Southeast Asia is lost.

In effect, then, the United States would have lost the Pacific phase of World War II, which was fought, in part, to prevent Japan from constructing a closed "co-prosperity sphere" in Asia from which the United States would be excluded. The theoretical framework for these considerations was the so-called domino theory which was formulated quite clearly before the Korean war, as was the decision to support French colonialism.

DOMINO THEORY AND "IDEOLOGICAL EXPANSION"

It is fashionable today to deride the domino theory, but in fact it contains an important kernel of plausibility, perhaps truth. National independence and revolutionary social change, if successful, may very well be contagious. The danger is what Walt Rostow, writing in 1955, called the "ideological threat," specifically, "the possibility that the Chinese Communists can prove to Asians by progress in China that the Communist methods are better and faster than democratic methods"—*An American Policy in Asia*, page 7.

Similar fears were expressed by the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1959—Government edition of the Pentagon papers, X, 1198, 1213, 1226. State therefore urged that the United States do what it can to retard the economic progress of the Communist Asian states, a decision which, I believe, is quite remarkable in its cruelty.

A similar concern for Chinese "ideological expansion" was expressed in the planning for escalation in the fall of 1964. Fear was expressed that the rot would spread over mainland Southeast Asia, and that Thailand—always "the second line of defense" ever since the deep American involvement there starting in 1948—that it would accommodate to Communist China "even without any marked military move by Communist China." The "rot" in these cases is surely the ideological threat. It was, I assume, not expected that Ho Chi Minh would sail to Indonesia, let alone Hawaii. Recall that in this period there was much talk of a competition between the Chinese and the Indian models of development. In this context, fear of Chinese "ideological expansion" gave substance to the domino theory, quite apart from any speculation about Chinese aggression or about Kremlin-directed conspiracies carried out by the Viet Minh, as expressed in the National Security Council statements and elsewhere in the late forties.

It is interesting that the domino theory was never seriously challenged in the available record, though its more fantastic formulations were discounted. Rather, there was debate about timing and probability. The reason, I take it, is that stripped of fantasies, the doctrine was not implausible. Successful social and economic development in a unified Vietnam, Communist-led on the Chinese model, might well have posed a "threat" to other developing countries, in that peasant-based revolutionary movements within them might have been led to follow this model instead of relying on the industrial powers and adapting their pattern of development to the needs and interests of the industrial powers. This might very well have led to Japanese moves to accommodate in some fashion to the closed societies of East Asia, with a possible impact on India, ultimately even the Middle East, as the domino theory postulated: not by invasion, which was most unlikely, but by "ideological expansion," which was not so improbable.

VIETNAM TEST CASE IN KENNEDY PERIOD

In the Kennedy period, Vietnam was elevated to the status of a test case and, I think it is fair to say, a degree of hysteria was introduced into planning. But, nevertheless, the rational core of policymaking remained. Developing nations must be taught a lesson: they must observe the rules and not undertake national liberation on the do-it-yourself Chinese model, with mass mobilization of the population and a focus on internal needs and resources.

U.S. INTERPRETATION OF U.S. MOTIVES

The documentation for the pre-Kennedy period, I think, gives very substantial support to this U.S. interpretation of U.S. motives. I will cite one case: NSC 48/1, December, 1949. It warned that Southeast Asia "is the target of a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin" this is stated, is now clear. (We know from other records in the Pentagon Papers that they couldn't produce a particle of evidence for it.) The industrial plant of Japan and such strategic materials as Indonesian oil must be denied to the "Stalinist bloc," which might otherwise attain global dominance; they must be kept in the western orbit. Japan is the crucial prize in East Asia. Communist pressure on Japan will mount, because of proximity, the indigenous Japanese Communist movement which might be able to exploit cultural factors and economic hardship, and "the potential of Communist China as a source of raw materials vital to Japan and a market for its goods." Japan requires Asian food, raw materials, and markets; the United States should encourage "a considerable increase in southern Asiastic food and raw material exports" to avoid "preponderant dependence on Chinese sources." Analogous considerations hold of India. Furthermore these markets and sources of raw materials should be developed for U.S. purposes. "Some kind of regional association . . . among the non-Communist countries of Asia might become an important means of developing a favorable atmosphere for such trade among ourselves and with other parts of the world."

The general lines of this analysis persist in the following years. As John F. Kennedy once said in 1956, Vietnam is "the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike," terminology quite characteristic of that period. He also spoke of the political liberty of South Vietnam which was such an inspiration to other peoples in Asia and other peoples of the world, also in terms characteristic of that period.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN TWO KINDS OF ANTI-COMMUNISM

It is often argued that U.S. intervention was motivated by blind anti-Communism and other errors. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between two kinds of "anti-Communism."

Opposition to indigenous movements in Asia that might pursue the Chinese model of development—this cannot properly be called blind anti-Communism; rather, it is quite rational imperialism which seeks to prevent any nibbling away at areas that provide the western industrial powers and Japan with free access to markets, raw materials, a cheap labor force, the possibility for export of pollution and opportunities for investment.

From the late forties these were very explicit understandings and policies in National Security Council and other analyses and they remain so throughout.

On the other hand, say, as in NSC 48/1 of 1949, the reference to a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin against Southeast Asia, with the Viet Minh as its agent, is indeed blind anti-Communism; that is to say, pure ideology beyond the reach of evidence but extremely useful as a propaganda device to rally domestic support for military intervention against indigenous Communist-led movements. The Russians behave no differently when they invade Czechoslovakia. They state—for all I know even believe—that they are doing so to protect the Czech people from the machinations of Wall Street, the CIA, and the West German aggressors. In fact, they are seeking to preserve the Russian empire from erosion from within.

The record makes clear that the United States did not enter the Indochina war because it had discovered the Viet Minh to be Russian or Chinese agents. Nor did it repeatedly escalate this war because it found that the NLF was a puppet of the North—China, or Moscow. Quite the opposite was true. First came the intervention, for entirely different reasons, and then the effort to establish the dependence and control that was required for propaganda purposes and also, I presume, for the self-image of the policymakers.

It is, after all, psychologically much easier to destroy agents of Chinese aggression than those who had captured the nationalist movement of Vietnam.

One form of anti-Communism motivated U.S. intervention: namely, opposition to indigenous Communist-led movements, under the assumptions of the domino theory.

A second form of anti-Communism was invoked to justify the intervention, publicly and internally: fear of a Kremlin-directed conspiracy or Chinese aggression—as far as we know, the figment of imagination.

Much the same has been true elsewhere: for example, in Greece in the midforties and in the Caribbean, repeatedly.

FAILURE TO RELATE VIETNAM POLICY TO DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE

A serious defect of the Pentagon study, inherent in Secretary McNamara's guidelines, is its failure to relate U.S. policy in Vietnam to developments elsewhere, even in Southeast Asia. Had the historians been able to spread a somewhat wider net, they would have discovered, for example, that the domino theory was expressed by Secretary of State Marshall with regard to Greece in 1947; in this case, the Middle Eastern countries, not Japan and Indonesia, were the farther dominoes that concerned him. They would also have discovered intriguing similarities between U.S. intervention in Indochina and in Korea from 1945–1950. They might have noted that the U.S. escalation of clandestine activities in Vietnam and Laos in late 1963 and 1964 apparently coincided with a similar escalation of attacks on Cambodia by the Khmer Serei, trained and equipped by the U.S. Special Forces and the CIA.

They would have observed that from 1948 the United States was deeply involved in Thai affairs, supporting a corrupt and at times savage military dictatorship, at first under a Japanese collaborator.

They would have determined, in short, that the United States has not been a confused victim of events, but an active agent, pursuing policies that fell within a rather coherent global strategy: to carve out and stabilize a system of open societies, societies in which, in particular, U.S. capital can operate more or less freely. Though this is far from the sole operative factor in U.S. policy, still it is surely the beginning of wisdom to recognize its crucial role.

LESSON OF PENTAGON HISTORY

At one crucial point in the planning to escalate the war in 1964, William Bundy raised the question whether it would be possible to carry out the preferred escalatory option "under the klieg lights of a democracy." I think he is quite right to raise this question, though not exactly for the reasons he gave. Secrecy and deceit are essential components of aggression. The visibility of the American war of annihilation in South Vietnam was undobtedly a factor in turning much of the population to protest and resistance, much to the credit of American society. The social costs of empire, in a healthy democracy, would impede imperial planners. But a system of centralized power, insulated from public scrutiny and operating in secret, possessing vast means of destruction and hampered by few constraints will naturally tend to commit aggression and atrocities. That is the primary lesson of the Pentagon history, to my mind, although I think we hardly need this valuable and illuminating record to establish the fact.

What is worse, I think very little has changed. Even many opponents of the war pretend to themselves that others are to blame for the catastrophe of Vietnam. In a strong editorial statement against the war, the New York Times last Sunday states:

> This is not to say that Americans, including the political and military commands and the GI's themselves, did not originally conceive their role quite honestly as that of liberators and allies in the cause of freedom; but such idealistic motives had little chance to prevail against local leaders skilled in the art of manipulating their foreign protectors. May 7, 1972.

Once again we have the image of the American political leadership, noble and virtuous, bewildered and victimized, but not responsible, never responsible for what it has done. The corruption of the intellect and the moral cowardice revealed by such statements defy comment.

Whether the U.S. will withdraw from Vietnam short of true genocide and perhaps even the serious threat of international war is, I am afraid, an open question. There is, unfortunately, sufficient reason to suppose that the same grim story will be reenacted elsewhere.

(Dr. Chomsky's prepared statement follows:)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NOAM CHOMSKY ON THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Reviewing the record of American intervention in Indochina, one cannot fail to be struck by the continuity of basic assumptions through successive administrations. Never has there been the slightest deviation from the principle that a non-Communist regime must be imposed and defended, regardless of popular sentiment. The scope of the principle was narrowed when it was conceded, by about 1960, that North Vietnam was irretrievably "lost". Otherwise, the principle has been maintained without equivocation. Given this principle, the strength of the Vietnamese resistance, the military power available to the United States and the lack of effective constraints, one can deduce with precision the strategy of annihilation that was gradually undertaken.

On May 10, 1949 Dean Acheson informed U.S. officials in Saigon and Paris that "no efffort [should] be spared" to assure the success of the Bao Dai government, since there appeared to be "no other alternative to estab[lishment] Commie pattern Vietnam". He further urged that this government should be "truly representative even to extent including outstanding non-Commie leaders now supporting Ho". A State Department policy statement of the preceding September had noted that the Communists under Ho Chi Minh had "captur[ed] control of the nationalist movement", thus impeding the "long-term objective" of the United States, "to eliminate so far as possible Communist influence in Indochina". We are unable to suggest any practicable solution to the French, the report continued, "as we are all too well aware of the unpleasant fact that Communist Ho Chi Minh is the strongest and perhaps the ablest figure in Indochina and that any suggested solution which excludes him is an expedient of uncertain outcome." But to Acheson, Ho's popularity and ability were of no greater moment than his nationalist credentials: "Question whether Ho as much nationalist as Commie is irrelevant."

In May 1967, John McNaughton presented a memorandum which the Pentagon historian takes to imply a significant modification of policy towards a more limited and conciliatory stance. The Saigon government, he urged, should be moved "to reach an accommodation with the non-Communist South Vietnamese who are under the VC banner; to accept them as members of an opposition political party, and, if necessary, to accept their individual participation in the national government . . ." (Gravel Edition, *Pentagon Papers*, vol. IV, p. 489). Exactly Acheson's proposal of 18 years earlier, restricted now to South Vietnam.

In a summary of the situation after the Tet offensive of 1968, the director of the Pentagon Study asks whether the U.S. can "overcome the apparent fact that the Viet Cong have 'captured' the Vietnamese nationalist movement while the GVN has become the refuge of Vietnamese who were allied with the French in the battle against the independence of their nation?" (ii, 414). His question expressed the dilemma of the State Department 20 years before, and properly so. The biogrophies of Thieu, Ky and Khiem indicate the continuity of policy; all served with the French forces, as did most of the top ARVN officers. "Studies of peasant attitudes conducted in recent years have demonstrated that for many, the struggle which began in 1945 against colonialism continued uninterrupted throughout Diem's regime: in 1954, the foes of nationalists were transformed from France and Bao Dai, to Diem and the U.S. . . . but the issues at stake never changed" (I, 295). Correspondingly, the Pentagon considered its problem to be to "deter the Viet Cong (formerly called Viet Minh)"—May, 1959. The Thieu regime today has a power base remarkably like Diem's, and substantial segments of the urban intelligentsia—"the people who count," as Ambassador Lodge once put it (II, 738)—now speak out against U.S. intervention.

An NIE of June, 1953 discussed the gloomy prospects for the "Vietnamese government" given "the failure of Vietnamese to rally to [it]", the fact that the population assist the Viet Minh more than the French, the inability of "the Vietnam leadership" to mobilize popular energy and resources, and so on (I, 391f). With hardly more than a change of names, this analysis might be interchanged with the despairing report from MACCORDS on December 31, 1967, deploring the corruption of the GVN, the ever-widening gap between the people and the GVN, and its growing weakness. With these words, the record of U.S.–GVN relations ends (II, 406–7).

One may, perhaps, argue that the popular mood counts for less than in earlier years, now that the U.S. has succeeded, partially at least, in "grinding the enemy down by sheer weight and mass" (Robert Komer; II, 575), and now that North Vietnamese forces have increasingly been drawn into the war, as a direct and always anticipated consequence of American escalation, so that the American war against the rural society of South Vietnam now increasingly takes on something of the aspect of a regional conflict, as had been alleged in Administration propaganda—quite falsely—many years earlier.

The President states that "The Communists have failed in their efforts to win over the people of South Vietnam politically" (April 26, 1972). That is quite true. He did not add, however, that these efforts were blocked by American force. Because the Communists appeared capable of gaining a political victory, the Diem regime could not tolerate democratic structures in 1954 (as Joseph Buttinger, for one, has pointed out) and was forced to resort to violence and repression; U.S. troops were introduced in support of combat operations in the early 1960's; further escalation was planned in 1964; the U.S. sought to avoid "premature negotiations" until the enemy had been destroyed by force; all of Vietnam was subjected to massive bombardment, and the South, to a direct American invasion, in early 1965. The programs of deliberate refugee generation (as advocated explicitly by Robert Komer; IV, 441), the destruction of the rural society, the Phoenix program of assassination and terror—all were undertaken to overcome the "clear and growing lack of legitimacy of the GVN", a constant refrain in the documentary record, and to prevent a Communist political victory. The refusal to accept a political accommodation in the South today derives from the same consideration. It must be emphasized that this is the central issue standing in the way of a negotiated settlement, as it has been throughout.

On January 6, 1965 William Bundy wrote that "the situation in Vietnam is now likely to come apart more rapidly than we had anticipated in November . . . the most likely form of coming apart would be a government of key groups starting to negotiate covertly with the Liberation front or Hanoi," soon asking "that we get out". The preceding August, Ambassador Taylor had explained Communist strategy: "to seek a political settlement favorable to the Communists", passing through neutralism to "the technique of a coalition government" (III, 531). Intelligence concurred, estimating that "it was the Communist intention to seek victory through a 'neutralist coalition' rather than by force of arms" (III, 207; analyst). The President, in March, 1964, had warned Ambassador Lodge to "knock . . . down the idea of neutralization wherever it rears its ugly head". Neutralism, as Ambassador Taylor noted, "appeared to mean throwing the internal political situation open and thus inviting Communist participation" (III, 675), for obvious reasons an intolerable prospect.

The dilemma noted in 1948 was never resolved. The political weakness of the U.S.-imposed regimes—Quisling regimes, in effect—forced the U.S. to take over the war and ultimately to devastate the rural society. On occasion, it was difficult even to obtain formal GVN authorization for U.S. escalation. At one crucial moment, the new program of escalation of February, 1965 was received "with enthusiasm" by Ambassador Taylor, who then "explained the difficulties he faced in obtaining authentic GVN concurrence 'in the condition of virtual non-government' which existed in Saigon at that moment" (III, 323).

The problem was always understood by experts on the scene. John Paul Vann, USOM Field Operations Coordinator, circulated a report in 1965 based on the premise that a social revolution was in process in South Vietnam "primarily identified with the National Liberation Front" and that "a popular political base for the Government of South Vietnam does not now exist". The U.S. must therefore take over. In the early 1960's Bernard Fall wrote:

> Why is it that we must use top-notch elite forces, the cream of the crop of American, British, French, or Australian commando and special warfare schools; armed with the very best that advanced technology can provide; to defeat Viet-Minh Algerians, or Malady "CT's" [Chinese terrorists], almost none of whom can lay claim to similar expert training and only in the rarest of cases to equality in fire power?
>
> The answer is very simple: It takes all the technical proficiency our system can provide to make up for the woeful lack of popular support and political savvy of most of the regimes that the West has thus far sought to prop up. The Ameri-

cans who are now fighting in South Viet-Nam have come to appreciate this fact out of first-hand experience. (Street Without Joy, 1964, p. 372.)

A decade later, the same analysis holds. There is every reason to suppose that it will continue to apply in the future, and not only in Southeast Asia.

The major premise of the American intervention has always been that *we* must "build a nation" in the South to counter the Communist Vietnamese, who seemed to be alone in their ability to mobilize the population. The enemy has found "a dangerously clever strategy for licking the United States", the director of Systems Analysis warned. "Unless we recognize and counter it now, that strategy may become all too popular in the future" (IV, 466). The strategy was to wage a war of national liberation based on the aspirations of the Vietnamese peasants for independence and social justice.

The outside power was never able to compete. The U.S. could maim and kill, drive peasants from their homes, destroy the countryside and organized social life, but not "build a nation" in the approved image. We had taken on a society that was simply not fit for domination. Therefore, it had to be destroyed. This was worse than a crime, it was a blunder, as the realistic experts now soberly explain.

American ambassadors proposed that the U.S. should influence the GVN to adopt a program "to give the new government an idealistic appeal or philosophy which will compete with that declared by the VC" (Bunker, August, 1967; II, 403), or to "Saturate the minds of the people with some socially conscious and attractive ideology, which is susceptible of being carried out" (Lodge; mid-1964, II, 530). Somehow, these concepts never succeeded in overcoming the "idealistic appeal" of the NLF in rural Vienam.

Failing to saturate the minds of the people with a sufficiently attractive ideology, the Administration turned to the easier task of saturating the country with troops and bombs and defoliants. A State Department paper observed that "Saturation bombing by artillery and airstrikes . . . is an accepted tactic, and there is probably no province where this tactic has not been widely employed" (end of 1966; IV, 398). The only objection raised is that it might be more profitable to place greater emphasis on winning support for the Saigon regime. That U.S. force should be devoted to winning support for its creation, the Saigon regime, apparently seemed no more strange to the author of this statement than that the U.S. should be conducting saturation bombing of all provinces in South Vietnam.

The main thrust of the American war has been against the population of South Vietnam, from the early 1960's, and with a vast increase in 1965 when a virtual occupying army was deployed and the "basic strategy of punitive bombing" was initiated in the South (Westmoreland, March, 1965; III, 464). It is revealing to investigate the decision to undertake the massive air attack on South Vietnam. "*It takes time to make hard decisions*," McNaughton wrote: "It took us almost a year to make the decision to bomb North Vietnam" (IV, 48). The decision is studied in painstaking detail. Little is said, however, about the decision to bomb South Vietnam at more than triple the intensity by 1966. This was the fundamental policy decision of early 1965. As Bernard Fall pointed out not long after, "what changed the character of the Vietnam war was *not* the decision to bomb North Vietnam; *not* the decision to use American ground troops in south Vietnam; but the decision to wage unlimited aerial warfare inside the country at the price of literally pounding the place to bits". But of this decision, we learn very little in the Pentagon history, and only a few scattered remarks indicate the effects of the bombing.

The contrast between the attention given to the bombing of the North and the far more destructive bombing in South Vietnam is still more remarkable in the light of the fact that South Vietnam, from early 1965, was subjected not only to unprecedented aerial attack but also to artillery bombardment which may well have been even more destructive. In January, 1966 Secretary McNamara introduced into Congressional testimony parts of a "Motivation and Morale study", still otherwise secret, which indicated that artillery bombardment may be even more effective than air attack in causing villagers "to move where they will be safe from such attacks", 'regardless of their attitude to the GVN" (Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committee Hearings, January, 1966). The study was optimistic, concluding that such methods would help dry up the popular sea in which the guerillas swim. In later years, Westmoreland and others were to point to the denial of recruits from populated areas in the South as the cause for infiltration of regular North Vietnamese troops, first confirmed on a small scale in late April, 1965.

The reason why the bombing of the North was given such meticulous attention, while the far greater attack on the South was undertaken as a matter of course, seems clear enough. The bombing of North Vietnam was highly visible, very costly to the United States and extremely dangerous, with a constant and perceived threat of general war. The far more savage attack on the South was merely destroying the rural society, and therefore—so the documentary record indicates—did not merit the attention of the planners in Washington.

The moral level of planning is strikingly revealed by this contrast. It is further illustrated on the rare occasions when some qualms are expressed about the bombing. When B–52 bombing began in mid-1965, William Bundy noted one and only one problem: "we look silly and arouse criticism if these [B–52 raids] do not show significant results" (IV, 612). If the B–52 raids do show significant results, we may turn out to be mass murderers, since in the nature of the case, there can be at best partial information about the targets of these weapons of mass terror and destruction; but that appears to be no problem at all. Within a few months, B–52 raids were reported by Bernard Fall and others in the populous Mekong Delta, with devastating effects on the civilian society, a pattern repeated elsewhere in South Vietnam, and recently, in the North as well.

There is, to my knowledge, no record of any hesitation about the use of any military tactic except on grounds of the potential cost to the decisionmakers and the interests they represent.

The concern for law is fully comparable. The supreme law of the land clearly prohibits the threat or use of force in international affairs, except in the case of collective self-defense against armed attack. The record shows plainly that that American use of force against the population of South Vietnam always preceded anything attributable to the DRV and was always vastly greater in scale—putting aside the question whether the DRV was entitled to come to the aid of the Southern NLF after the dismantling of the Geneva Accords by the U.S. and the regime it instituted in the South, after the extensive use of terror by this regime, which far exceeded the subsequent counter-violence of the indigenous resistance.

In fact, the Administration never regarded itself as bound by the law. To cite one case, immediately after the Geneva Agreements, the NSC adopted NSC 5429/2 (August 20, 1954), which recommended covert operations and other pressures and preparation for direct use of U.S. military force in the event of "local Communist subversion or rebellion *not constituting armed attack*" (my emphasis), including use of U.S. military force "against the external source of such subversion or rebellion (including Communist China if determined to be the source)". The recommendation that force be used in the absence of armed attack is in clear and explicit violation of law. Further recommendations were: "Conduct covert operations on a large and effective scale" throughout Indochina, in particular, to "Exploit available means to make more difficult the control by the Viet Minh of North Vietnam", to defeat Communist subversion and influence, to maintain non-Communist governments elsewhere in Indochina, and "to prevent a Communist victory through all-Vietnam elections". These proposals not only express an open contempt for solemn treaty obligations (the U.N. Charter in particular), but also indicate a clear commitment to subvert the Geneva Accords. I might add that the contents of this document and the events of the nex few years are, in my opinion, presented quite inadequately in the Pentagon Papers history.

In a parody of the law, planners repeatedly insisted that "After, *but only after*, we have established a clear pattern of pressure" could peaceful means be considered (William Bundy, August 11, 1964). The Pentagon historian notes that President Johnson's "initiative" of April 7, 1965, "was in accord with the 'pressures policy' rationale that had been worked out in November, 1964, which held that U.S. readiness to negotiate was not to be surfaced until after a series of air strikes had been carried out against important targets in North Vietnam" (III, 356). "Significantly", the peace initiative was preceded by intensive bombing. Repeatedly in subsequent years, apparent negotiations opportunities were undercut by sudden escalation of bombing (IV, 135, 205). The Pentagon historian regards this as "inadvertent" or "unfortunate coincidence". It is possible, however, that each incident is an example of the "pressures policy", the general policy of application of force prior to efforts towards peaceful settlement of disputes, in explicit contradiction to the law. Cf. U.N. Charter, Articles 2, 33, 39.

The "pressures policy" rationale was inevitable, given the commitment to a "non-communist regime" and the realization that a settlement based on indigenous political forces would probably not achieve this objective. The political weakness of the U.S.-imposed regimes led to the strategy of annihilation, out of "military necessity"; it also led to reliance on force in advance of and in place of the peaceful means prescribed by law.

The essence of the U.S. government position is revealed by public statements explaining the concept of "aggression". Consider, for example, the fairly typical remarks of Adlai Stevenson before the U.N. Security Council, May 21, 1964 (III, 715–6). He observed that "the point is the same in Vietnam today as it was in Greece in 1947." In both cases the U.S. was defending a free people from "internal aggression". What is "internal aggression"? It is "aggression" by a mass-based indigenous movement against a government protected by foreign power, where the "internal aggression" has the kind of outside support that few wars of liberation have lacked (the American revolution, to cite one case). In the case of Greece, as of Vietnam, the Administration has insisted that the "internal aggressors" were merely agents of a global conspiracy directed by Moscow or "Peiping", in both cases, in defiance of available evidence, though even if it were true, U.S. intervention would not have been permissible without Security Council authorization. As noted, the Government in effect conceded that the intervention was illegitimate, by insisting upon its authority to intervene in the case of local subversion and aggression not constituting armed attack, that is, "internal aggression".

The JCS in February, 1955, foresaw three basic forms in which aggression in Southeast Asia can occur: a) Overt armed attack from outside of the area. b) Overt armed attack from within the area of each of the sovereign states. c) Aggression other than armed, i.e., political warfare, or subversion.

The concept of overt armed attack from within a sovereign state is Ambassador Stevenson's "internal aggression". In defining "political warfare" as a form of aggression, the Joint Chiefs reveal that they comprehend with precision and insight the fundamental position of the U.S. executive.

Many other examples can be given, from the Pentagon history, to illustrate the same concept of "internal aggression". Indigenous forces are carrying out "internal aggression" against regimes chosen to rule by foreign force, and protected from their own population by this foreign force (allegedly acting in "collective self-defense" against this "aggression"). Ultimately, force is drawn into the conflict in support of the indigenous rebellion, and we hear cries from Washington about the perfidy of the North Vietnamese aggressors and their allies. To cite only the most obvious case, consider the talks of "North Vietnamese aggression" today, aggression that is taking place in areas that were invaded and occupied by the American military seven years earlier, and devastated in American military operations. I need not spell out the facts, which have been described in ample detail elsewhere.

The Pentagon Papers provide evidence of a criminal conspiracy of long duration to engage the United States in aggressive war. One may debate the sufficiency of the evidence, but hardly its existence. It is natural, if somewhat ironic, that the Justice Department, instead of investigating the possible criminal conspiracy exposed by the Pentagon Papers, has chosen rather to investigate and prosecute those who have revealed these acts to the public. Senator Fulbright has stated, in a different but related connection, that: "I and some of my colleagues have almost been reduced to the situation where it makes no difference what is put into law, the administration will not abide by it." He has also expressed his hope that some day "this country will return to its senses and we will then have an opportunity to resurrect the basic principles of law on which this country was founded" (Congressional Record, October 4, 1971). I should only like to add that thousands of draft resisters and deserters and others have reluctantly undertaken civil disobedience on the basis of concerns that are, in my opinion, rather similar. Having called off the game of obedience to law, the Administration has forfeited its authority to enforce the rules.

The Administration attitude toward Congress and the public is of a piece with its concern for legal obligations. The unending record of deceit illustrates a good deal of contempt for Congress and the public, in my opinion. For example, Secretary Rusk, testifying before this Committee on January 28, 1966, stated that by January, 1965 the 325th Division of the North Vietnamese Army had been moved to South Vietnam, an act that constituted "agression by means of an armed attack" and entitled the U.S. to respond under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. He requested this assertion in testimony on February 18, 1966. On this crucial matter the Pentagon Papers tell a different story. The first reference to regular PAVN units appears in a CIT–DIA memorandum of April 21, 1965 which "reflected the acceptance into the enemy order of battle of one regiment of the 325th PAVN Division said to be located in Kontum province" (III, 438). Chester Cooper, who was responsible for preparing the material on infiltration, writes that by the end of April "it was believed" that one battalion of regular PAVN troops were in South Vietnam at this time (*The Lost Crusade*, 1970, p. 276–7).

Evidently this and later reports were not too persuasive. On July 2, in a memorandum to General Goodpaster, John McNaughton states: "I am quite concerned about the increasing probability that there are regular PAVN troops either in the II Corps area or in Laos directly across the border from II Corps" (IV, 291, 277). On July 14, the JCS included one regiment of the 325th PAVN division in their estimate of 48,500 "Viet Cong organized combat units" (IV, 295), and a SNIE of July 23 predicted that if the U.S. increased its strength in South Vietnam to 175,000 by November 1, then in order to offset this increase, the Communists would probably introduce a PAVN force totalling 20,000 to 30,000 men by the end of 1965 (III, 484f.).

For comparison, note that on April 21, 1965 Secretary McNamara reported that 33,500 U.S. troops were in-country in addition to 2,000 Koreans who had been dispatched on January 8, 1965 (III, 706; III, 139). He further reported the unanimous recommendation of the Honolulu Meeting of the preceding day that U.S. forces be raised to 82,000 supplemented with 7,250 Korean and Australian troops—the day before the "ominous" CIA–DIA report. On July 1, planned U.S. deployments were 85,000 troops (III, 475). In mid-July, when the JCS reported one PAVN regiment in the South, the President approved the request that the U.S. troop level be raised to 175,000 in 1965, with another 100,000 recommended for 1966, and an estimated U.S. killed-in-action of 500 per month (III, 396, 416; IV, 297, 299). Recall that the U.S. troop level had reached 23,000 by the end of 1964 (II, 160) and that U.S. forces had been directly engaged in combat operations for three years, at that point.

The contempt for the public is of the same order. For example, on February 26, 1966 the President stated: "We do not have on my desk at the moment any unfilled requests from General Westmoreland" (New York Times edition of the Pentagon Papers, p. 467). In fact, there was at this time a request to double the troop commitment, and the President had on his desk a Memorandum from the Secretary of Defense stating that with the deployments recommended (400,000 by the end of 1966 and perhaps more than 600,000 the following year), U.S. killed-in-action could be expected to reach 1,000 per month (IV, 309, 623–4). The Administration view was accurately expressed by William Bundy, when he stated that if policies are to be modified, then "a conditioning of the U.S. public" is necessary (he added that where this cannot be done with sufficient rapidity, the executive may find itself trapped by its earlier misrepresentations—IV, 611). It goes without saying that government officials have no legal authority to misrepresent matters to the public, or—under a reasonable interpretation of the First Amendment—to prosecute the exposure of their deceit.

The general attitude towards American democracy is revealed in a striking way during the deliberations of 1964. Plans for the February 1965 escalation were undertaken with an awareness of the necessity for waiting until the President had a Congressional mandate and a popular mandate. The planning through 1964 places "D-Day" shortly after the elections. After the Tonkin Gulf incident and the President's "smashing victory at the polls", his "feasible options increased", the Pentagon historian relates: "President Johnson was now armed with both a popular mandate and broad Congressional authorization" and could therefore proceed (III, 4f.). During the September deliberations, "unity of domestic American opinion" was regarded as precondition to escalations, but "during the November debates, this is no longer an important factor". In the interim, the President had been elected "with an overwhelming mandate" (III, 113–6).

It is remarkable that nowhere does anyone take note of the fact that the Congressional support was obtained in a rather dubious fashion, and that the popular mandate was *not* to escalate. The obvious conclusion to draw from this history is that peace-minded people should have voted for Senator Goldwater, so that the "popular mandate" would have been less overwhelming, since evidently it was only its scale and not its character that mattered.

To a large extent, the debate over the war counterposes the "optimists", who believe that with persistence we can win, to the "pessimists", who argue that the U.S. cannot, at reasonable cost, guarantee the rule of the regime of its choice in

South Vietnam. There is a third position which, unfortunately, is barely represented in policy-making so far as the documentary record indicates: namely, that the U.S. executive should abide by the supreme law of the land and refrain from forceful intervention in the internal affairs of others. It appears that successive Administrations believed that Vietnam was the victim of a Kremlin-directed conspiracy in 1950, that there was "Aggression from the North" a decade later, and so on. They had the legal authority to express these beliefs and to appeal to the Security Council of the U.N. to determine the existence of a threat to peace. That they did not do so is self-explanatory. The U.S. executive had no authority to back French colonialism, to impose a terroristic regime (or even a benevolent democracy) on South Vietnam, to engage in clandestine war throughout Indochina, or to carry out a full-scale invasion of South Vietnam in 1965, demolishing the peasant society, or to wipe out the Plain of Jars and much of rural Cambodia under President Nixon, or to bomb Haiphong, or to carry out any of the other actions that have led to mass revulsion in this country and throughout much of the world. Had the U.S. executive been strictly bound by its legal obligations, which in my opinion do express reasonable principles of international behavior, we would never have found ourselves in the Indochina war.

Why, then, did the U.S. become so deeply engaged in this war? In the early period, the documentary record now available presents a fairly explicit account of rational, if cynical, pursuit of perceived self-interest. The U.S. has strategic and economic interests in Southeast Asia that must be secured. Holding Indochina is essential to securing these interests. Therefore we must hold Indochina. A critical consideration is Japan, which will eventually accommodate to the "Soviet Bloc" if Southeast Asia is lost. In effect, then, the U.S. would have lost the Pacific phase of World War II, which was fought, in part, to prevent Japan from constructing a closed "co-prosperity sphere" in Asia from which the U.S. would be excluded. The theoretical framework for these considerations was the domino theory, which was formulated clearly before the Korean war, as was the decision to support French colonialism.

It is fashionable today to deride the domino theory, but in fact it contains an important kernel of plausibility, perhaps truth. National independence and revolutionary social change, if successful, may very well be contagious. The danger is what Walt Rostow, writing in 1955, called the "ideological threat", specifically, "the possibility that the Chinese Communists can prove to Asians by progress in China that Communist methods are better and faster than democratic methods" (*An American Policy in Asia*, p. 7). Similar fears were expressed by the State Department and the JCS in 1959 (Government edition of the Pentagon Papers, X, 1198, 1213, 1226). State therefore urged that the U.S. do what it can to retard the economic progress of the Communist Asian states (*ibid.*, 1208), a decision that is remarkable in its cruelty. A similar concern for Chinese "ideological expansion" was expressed in the planning for escalation in the fall of 1964 (III, 218, 592). Fear was expressed that "the rot would spread" over mainland Southeast Asia, and that Thailand (always "the second line of defense") would accommodate to Communist China "even without any marked military move by Communist China" (III, 661). The "rot", in these cases, is surely the "ideological threat". Recall that in this period there was much talk of a competition between the Chinese and the Indian models of development. In this context, fear of Chinese "ideological expansion" gave substance to the domino theory, quite apart from any speculation about Chinese aggression or Kremlin-directed aggression by the Viet Minh.

It is interesting that the domino theory was never seriously challenged in the available record, though its more fantastic formulations were discounted. Rather, there was debate about timing and probability. Stripped of fantasies, the theory was not implausible. Successful social and economic development in a unified Vietnam, Communist-led on the Chinese model, might well have posed a "threat" to other developing countries, in that peasant-based revolutionary movements within them might have been led to follow this model instead of relying on the industrial powers and adapting their pattern of development to the needs and interests of the industrial powers. This might very well have led to Japanese moves to accommodate in some fashion to the "closed societies" of East Asia, with a possible impact on India. ultimately even the Middle East, as the domino theory postulated: not by invasion, which was most unlikely, but by "ideological expansion", which was not so improbable. In the Kennedy period, Vietnam was elevated to the status of a "test case", and, I think it is fair to say, a degree of hysteria was introduced into planning. But nevertheless the rational core of policy-making remained. Developing nations must be taught a lesson: they must observe the rules, and not undertake "national liberation" on the "do-it-yourself" Chinese model, with mass mobilization of the population and a focus on internal needs and resources.

Possibly the threat has now diminished, with the vast destruction in South Vietnam and elsewhere, and the hatreds and social disruption caused by the American intervention. It may be, then, that Vietnam can be lost to the Vietnamese without the dire consequences of social and economic progress of a sort that might be quite meaningful to the Asian poor.

The documentation for the pre-Kennedy period gives substantial support to this interpretation of U.S. motives. For example, NSC 48/1 (December, 1949) warned that Southeast Asia "is the target of a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin" (this is "now clear"). The industrial plant of Japan and such strategic materials as Indonesian oil must be denied to the "Stalinist bloc", which might otherwise attain global dominance; they must be kept in the Western orbit. Japan is the crucial prize in East Asia. Communist pressure on Japan will mount, because of proximity, the indigenous Japanese Communist movement which might be able to exploit cultural factors and economic hardship, and "the potential of Communist China as a source of raw materials vital to Japan and a market for its goods". Japan requires Asian food, raw materials, and markets; the U.S. should encourage "a considerable increase in Southern Asiatic food and raw material exports" to avoid "preponderant dependence on Chinese sources". Analogous considerations hold of India. Furthermore, these markets and sources of raw materials should be developed for U.S. purposes. "Some kind of regional association . . . among the non-Communist countries of Asia might become an important means of developing a favorable atmosphere for such trade among ourselves and with other parts of the world."

The general lines of this analysis persist through the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations (cf. NSC/64, NSC 48/5, NSC 124/2, etc.). To cite one case, an NSC staff study of February, 1952, warned that:

> The fall of Southeast Asia would underline the apparent economic advantages to Japan of association with the communist-dominated Asian sphere. Exclusion of Japan from trade with Southeast Asia would seriously affect the Japanese economy, and increase Japan's dependence on United States aid. In the long run the loss of Southeast Asia, especially Malaya and Indonesia, could result in such economic and political pressures in Japan as to make it extremely difficult to prevent Japan's eventual accommodation to the Soviet bloc. (I, 375)

We know from other sources that the U.S. put pressure on Japan to put a stop to its "accommodation" with China, offering access to Southeast Asia as an explicit inducement. Vietnam was regarded as "the Keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike" (John F. Kennedy, 1956—the terminology is characteristic of the period).

It is often argued that U.S. intervention was motivated by "blind anti-communism" and other errors. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between two kinds of "anti-communism". Opposition to indigenous movements in Asia that might pursue the Chinese model of development is not "blind anti-communism". Rather, it is rational imperialism, which seeks to prevent any nibbling away at areas that provide the Western industrial powers (and Japan) with free access to markets, raw materials, a cheap labor force, the possibility for export of pollution, and opportunities for investment. On the other hand, reference to a "coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin" against Southeast Asia, with the Viet Minh as its agent, is indeed "blind anti-communism", that is, pure ideology, unsupported by evidence, but extremely useful as a propaganda device to rally domestic support for military intervention against indigenous communist-led movements. The Russians behave no differently when they invade Czechoslovakia. They state, and perhaps even believe, that they are doing so to protect the Czech people from the machinations of Wall Street, the CIA, and the West German aggressors. In fact, they are seeking to preserve the Russian empire from erosion from within.

Administration spokesmen have held to the view that by destroying Vietnam we are somehow standing firm against Chinese or Russian aggression. As George Carver of the CIA once put it, our objective is: "Demonstrating the sterile futility of the militant and aggressive expansionist policy advocated by the present rulers of Communist China" (IV, 82). One searches the record in vain for evidence of this policy. The Pentagon historian observes that Chinese Communist activity in Southeast Asia appeared "ominous" to Washington in late 1964 (III, 267), but he cites as the factual basis only "Sukarno's abrupt withdrawal of Indonesia's participation in the U.N.", which led to various speculations. In earlier years, there were determined efforts, always unavailing, to establish a link between the Viet Minh and Moscow or Peking, though this failure in no way shook the belief, virtually a dogma, that the Vietnamese revolutionaries must be Chinese or Russian agents. The intellectual failures of the "intelligence community" are revealed by the fact that the Pentagon historians were able to discover only one staff paper, in a record of more than two decades, "which treats communist reactions primarily in terms of the separate national interests of Hanoi, Moscow, and Peiping, rather than primarily in terms of an overall communist strategy for which Hanoi is acting as an agent" (II, 107; a SNIE of November, 1961). Even in the "intelligence community", where the task is to get the facts straight and not to proclaim that France is defending the territorial integrity of Vietnam from the Viet Minh and the "Commie-dominated bloc of slave states" (Acheson, October, 1950; I, 70), it was apparently next to impossible to perceive, or at least to express the simple truth that North Vietnam, like the Soviet Union, China, the U.S., and the NLF, has its own interests, which are often decisive.

The record makes clear that the U.S. did not enter the Indochina war because it had discovered the Viet Minh to be Russian or Chinese agents. Nor did it repeatedly escalate this war because it found that the NLF was a puppet of the North (or China, or Moscow). Quite the opposite was true. First came the intervention, for entirely different reasons, and then the effort to establish the deendence and control that was required for propaganda purposes, and also, no doubt, for the self-image of the policy-makers. It is, after all, psychologically much easier to destroy agents of Chinese aggression than those who had captured the nationalist movement of Vietnam. One form of anti-communism motivated U.S. intervention: namely, opposition to indigenous communist-led movements, under the assumptions of the domino theory. A second form of anti-communism was invoked to justify the intervention, publicly and internally: fear of a Kremlin-directed conspiracy or Chinese aggression—as far as we know, the figment of imagination.

Much the same has been true elsewhere: e.g., in Greece in the 1940's and in the Caribbean, repeatedly. A serious defect of the Pentagon study, inherent in Secretary McNamara's guidelines, is its failure to relate U.S. policy in Vietnam to developments elsewhere, even in Southeast Asia. Had the historians been able to spread a somewhat wider net, they would have discovered, for example, that the domino theory was expressed by Secretary of State Marshall with regard to Greece in 1947—in this case, the Middle Eastern countries, not Japan and Indonesia, were the "farther dominoes" that concerned him. They would also have discovered intriguing similarities between U.S. intervention in Indochina and in Korea from 1945–50. They might have noted that the U.S. escalation of clandestine activities in Vietnam and Laos in late 1963 and 1964 apparently coincided with a similar escalation of attacks on Cambodia by the Khmer Serei, trained and equipped by the U.S. Special Forces and the CIA. They would have observed that from 1948, the U.S. was deeply involved in Thai affairs, supporting a corrupt and at times savage military dictatorship, at first under a Japanese collaborator. They would have determined, in short, that the U.S. has not been a confused victim of events, but an active agent, pursuing policies that fell within a rather coherent global strategy: to carve out and stabilize a system of "open societies", societies in which, in particular, U.S. capital can operate more or less freely. Though this is far from the sole operative factor in U.S. policy, still it is surely the beginning of wisdom to recognize its crucial role.

It is often argued that the costs of such intervention demonstrate that there can be no underlying imperial drive. This reasoning is fallacious, however. In the first place, the "costs" are in large measure profits for selected segments of American society. It is senseless to describe state expenditures for jet planes or cluster bombs or computers for the automated air war simply as "costs of intervention." There are, to be sure, costs of empire that benefit virtually no one within: 50,000 American corpses, or the deterioration in the strength of the U.S. economy relative to its industrial rivals. But these general costs of empire are social costs, while the profits are again highly concentrated. Senator Church noted in recent Congressional Hearings that the U.S. has expended over $2 billion in aid to Brazil since 1964 to protect a "favorable investment climate" for a total investment of about $1.7 billion. This comes as no surprise to any student of modern history. In many respects, the same was true of the British empire, after the original rape of India. The costs of empire are distributed over the society as a whole; its profits revert to a few within. In this respect, the empire serves as a device for internal consolidation of power and privilege, and it is quite irrelevant to observe that its social costs are often very great.

It should also be noted that planners cannot unerringly calculate costs in advance. They cannot begin all over again if plans go awry. Though it is possible that the planners of the past 25 years would not have undertaken the effort to dominate Indochina had they known the consequences, they did not have the luxury of advance knowledge. On the assumptions of the domino theory, in its more realistic versions, the original calculation was not an unreasonable one, whatever one may think of its moral basis or its status in law. As I have indicated, I personally think it was deplorable on such grounds, but that is a different matter entirely. Furthermore, by the early 1960's, it is my impression that other and more irrational factors had come to predominate, a matter which is of some interest in itself, but which I will not explore here.

At one crucial point in the planning to escalate the war in 1964, William Bundy raised the question whether it would be possible to carry out the preferred escalatory option "under the klieg lights of a democracy" (III, 648). I think he is quite right to raise this question, though not exactly for the reasons he gave. Secrecy and deceit are essential components of aggression. The visibility of the American war of annihilation in South Vietnam was undoubtedly a factor in turning much of the population to protest and resistance, much to the credit of American society. The social costs of empire, in a healthy democracy, would impede imperial planners. But a system of centralized power, insulated from public scrutiny and operating in secret, possessing vast means of destruction and hampered by a few constraints will naturally tend to commit aggression and atrocities. That is the primary lesson of the Pentagon history, though we hardly need this valuable and illuminating record to establish the fact, foreseen by Thomas Jefferson, for example. There has, in the past generation, been a contrived inattention to foreign policy on the part of the public. Government secrecy has been a contributing factor, far outweighed, in my opinion, by the intense indoctrination of the postwar period that has rendered the public inert until quite recently. It comes as no surprise, under these circumstances, that Jefferson's prediction was fulfilled. If citizens "become inattentive to the public affairs," he wrote, then the government "shall all become wolves," a perceptive remark and an accurate prediction. Successive administrations "became wolves," international predators, architects of one of the most horrendous catastrophes of modern history.

What is worse, perhaps, very little has changed. Even many opponents of the war pretend to themselves that others are to blame for the catastrophe of Vietnam. In a strong editorial statement against the war, the *N.Y. Times* editors write:

"This is not to say that Americans, including the political and military commands and the G.I.'s themselves, did not originally conceive their role quite honestly as that of liberators and allies in the cause of freedom; but such idealistic motives had little chance to prevail against local leaders skilled in the art of manipulating their foreign protectors." (May 7, 1972).

Once again we have the image of the American political leadership, noble and virtuous, bewildered and victimized, but not responsible, never responsible for what it has done. The corruption of the intellect and the moral cowardice revealed by such statements defy comment.

Whether the U.S. will withdraw from Vietnam short of true genocide and perhaps even the serious threat of international war is, I am afraid, an open question. There is, unfortunately, sufficient reason to suppose that the same grim story will be re-enacted elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Chomsky, that is a very interesting and provocative statement.

DOMINO THEORY

I would like to clarify your point about the domino theory because it has been discussed very much.

The domino theory which I think most writers and commentators have talked about was of a military nature. It has always been conceived of in military terms. It seems to me you are suggesting, not that that has truth, but that the conception of the domino theory as a social and ideological problem is a true one. In other words, the concept for the organization of society which was developing in China and under Ho Chi Minh was the real danger and, if allowed to proceed without our intervention, it could succeed. In this sense you are saying it had validity; is that correct?

Would you elaborate about it? I don't want to confuse people who will interpret your saying that the domino theory is valid while they are still thinking of it in military terms.

Mr. CHOMSKY. That's right. Yes, that is exactly my point. The domino theory in military terms was always entirely senseless.

The CHAIRMAN. That is the one that has been promoted as being justification for our policy, isn't it?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, that is the one that has been promoted in most of the public statements.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what I mean.

Mr. CHOMSKY. But, of course, if you look more carefully at, for example, the internal record or even, say, such public statements as the one of Mr. Rostow which I quoted in a book that appeared in 1935, you see a different and somewhat more plausible variant of the theory, namely, the threat of "ideological expansion." This, for example, was introduced both by Michael Forrestal and by Ambassador William Sullivan in the planning for the escalation in late 1964. They both spoke of China's need for ideological successes, of the possible ideological expansion of China.

I really doubt very seriously that any American planner who thought for a little about it believed that the Vietnamese were going to conquer Thailand or they were going to conquer Malaya or Indonesia.

The CHAIRMAN. By arms?

Mr. CHOMSKY. By arms, and that version of the domino theory, although quite effective in enlisting public support for the war in a certain period, nevertheless certainly had no reality.

EFFECT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL

On the other hand, it was very likely that the unification of Vietnam, presumably this would have meant under Communist control, would have proceeded to bring about the kind of social and economic development that might have been quite meaningful and quite appealing to many of the Asian poor and, correspondingly, to peasant movements elsewhere. Peasant-based movements might have adopted such measures and gradually there would be an erosion of the areas of the so-called Third World that were held to be absolutely essential for the maintenance of American global policy, particularly because of their impact on Japan, as I mentioned. This seems to me, whatever one may think about this policy—frankly, I regard it as deplorable—the American policy of intervention, in my opinion, is deplorable on both moral and legal grounds, but that is not to say it was not rational.

The CHAIRMAN. What you are saying is we were afraid of the success of the control of the NLF or the Communists?

Mr. CHOMSKY. That is quite right and, in fact, if you look at the rare intelligence analysis, and to my recollection there is only one in the Pentagon Papers, sometime in 1959, that compares development in South Vietnam to development in North Vietnam, its results were hardly encouragingly to the American planners who hoped to prevent the rot from spreading, as they put it.

The CHAIRMAN. But they used rot in the sense of the success of the Administration, that is what I am trying to clarify.

Mr. CHOMSKY. That is right. I assume that when the American planners in, let's say, late 1964, were worried that the rot would spread to Thailand and then Malaya and Indonesia. I cannot believe they thought the Viet Minh or the Vietnamese would somehow conquer these countries. That was certainly a fantasy. But there is another sense in which the rot might spread and I think that is why they emphasized that Thailand might "accommodate," the common word that is used, even without military moves by Communist China or anyone else.

U.S. ALLEGIANCE TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES

The CHAIRMAN. Where does this leave our whole central justification for this and other activities—our allegiance to self-determination of peoples?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I do not believe that American policy or the policy of any great power is ever, has ever been, determined by commitment to self-determination of peoples. Rather it is determined by a commitment to the national interest as that is defined by the dominant groups in the society. Of course, virtually without exception or very few exceptions, imperial powers state that their concerns are noble, they are interested in self-determination or development or one thing or another. I simply urge that we apply to ourselves the same standards that we apply to the Soviet Union, for example, when we read its propaganda about its invasion of Czechoslovakia.

They also say that it was done from noble motives, to save socialist democracy, to prevent the Czech people from being attacked, you know, by the West Germans, run by the CIA and so on and so forth, and for all I know they even believe it. But I do not believe it and I do not see why anyone else should. The policy falls very simply into the long-term Russian objective of extending and maintaining its very brutal hold on its own empire, and the American policies have, as has often been clearly expressed in internal documents and elsewhere, been motivated by the desire to create a world of what are called open societies, meaning by that societies which are open to penetration, economic penetration and political control by the United States.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

The CHAIRMAN. That, together with your emphasis upon the economic aspects—you just said the opportunity for exploitation by ourselves and our allies—seems to be a difference between your view and

Mr. Schlesinger. You emphasize the significance of the economic, and Dr. Schlesinger, you thought this was of minor importance. Do you see any difference in your view and Dr. Chomsky's on this point and also on the domino theory?

THIRD POSSIBILITY FOR MEANING OF DOMINO THEORY

Mr. Schlesinger. Well, on the domino theory: I think there is a third possibility, has mentioned, lying between the notion that the domino theory meant that Ho Chi Minh was going to start conquering other nations, on the one hand, and the notion of a purely ideological effect, on the other. As I recall the apprehensions of the time, the phrase, the "falling dominoes", meant neither of those things so much as it meant the thought that a success in Vietnam would stimulate comparable guerrilla efforts in Laos and Cambodia and Thailand, and so on, and that these would be no doubt helped by a victorious Communist government in Saigon.

I say this, since we are listing various meanings of the term domino theory, not because I take it seriously, but because I think that is what they were talking about. In other words, they were talking about the guerrilla example rather than about direct conquest by a Communist government or about purely ideological impact.

OPEN DOOR CONCEPT

Yes, on the second point, this question of the economic interpretation of American policy after the war, obviously Mr. Chomsky and I have very sharp differences. There is a school of thought in American diplomatic historians which argues that, since the 1890's, American foreign policy has been determined by the pursuit of an "open door" for the export of American surplus goods and capital; and that, while this policy has occasionally involved tactical differences within the ruling elites of the United States as to how best to secure the open door; practically everything in our foreign policy can be reduced to the quest for the open door.

In fairness to Mr. Chomsky he says this is not the sole operative factor in U.S. policy. I would say in certain situations where there are not important military, political and strategic considerations involved, then the desire to seek profits for American business may play a role, and a most deforming one, in U.S. foreign policy. This is particularly true in the case of Latin America. I think there is little more shaming than President Nixon's directive in January that we should not only suspend all aid to Latin American countries that nationalize American-owned firms without adequate compensation but that we should try to prevent international agencies, like the IADB (Inter-American Development Bank) and The World Bank, from making loans to those countries. This sets up the U.S. government as a collection agent for U.S. business.

However, I think this kind of concern plays only a marginal role in our general foreign policy; nor do I think there is any necessary connection between the pursuit of the open door, for example, and opposition to Stalinism.

As one looks for the concept of the open door in the writings, for example, of American post-war leaders, I found only one very notable quotation which I will read to you:

"We cannot permit the door to be closed against our trade in Eastern Europe any more than we can in China. We must insist on an open door for trade throughout the world." Well, this did not come from President Truman, Dean Acheson or one of those wicked fellows. This was a quotation from Henry A. Wallace in the Madison Square Garden speech of September 12, 1946, a speech that led to his dismissal from the Truman Cabinet. This shows very clearly the disconnection between the search for the open door, on the one hand, and any particular policies toward Russia, on the other. In other words, the open door idea is perfectly compatible with the Wallace policy of accommodation or appeasement of the Soviet Union as well as with the Truman containment policy; and, therefore, it cannot be said to have determined any particular course of policy.

Moreover, it is impossible to understand on this open door thesis why, say, the democratic socialists of Europe were unhappy about the threat of communism in the 1940's. Why should the British Labor Government, why should Atlee and Bevin, why should the French Government under Leon Blum, why should European social democrats in general have been apprehensive about the Soviet Union? Why should they have become quite critical at times of American policy in this period as inadequately responsive to what they considered the Soviet threat? Obviously they were not anti-Soviet in the interest of expanding American capitalism.

U.S. ECONOMIC INTEREST IN THIRD WORLD

So it seems to me that there is no basis to say that the economic motive was the determinant of our foreign policy, nor indeed does the evidence cited by Mr. Chomsky demonstrate any such basis. His evidence mostly relates to Japan, and relates to economic matters as components in the strategic questions. The thesis that the internal needs of American capitalism required us to go into the third world is not sustained in the evidence in Mr. Chomsky's statement nor indeed can it be sustained. I will not bore you by repeating the figures in my statement showing the very limited extent to which American trade or American investment depends upon the third world.

Everyone knows that most of our trade is with other developed countries, that most of our investment is in other developed countries. You have to have industrialized countries to provide much in the way of effective markets or much in the way of investment outlets. The figures sustain this.

I do not think we have any kind of economic interest in the third world that would have led us into Vietnam. We did have a political strategic interest in keeping Japan as a friendly state and, therefore, had some concern about the economic impact of certain developments on Japan; but these were not a response to the need of American capitalism, nor have I been able to find in the Pentagon Papers—perhaps Mr. Chomsky has—any instance of business intervention in the formation of our Vietnam policy.

MR. CHOMSKY CALLED "RATIONALIST"

Mr. Chomsky may be too much of a rationalist. Both as a historian and as occasional participant in Government, I have concluded that very much of what takes place in Government is a product of ignorance, improvisation and mindlessness. I think that stupidity is a more helpful factor in interpreting our policy than conspiracy.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you wish to comment on that?

Mr. CHOMSKY. May I comment on that? [Laughter.]

You see I am very—and perhaps I am too much of a rationalist and I have never worked in the Government.

The CHAIRMAN. I did not hear that, speak up.

Mr. CHOMSKY. I am certainly a kind of a rationalist I guess, and I have never worked in the Government so I cannot speak from internal knowledge.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Was not reading the Pentagon Papers enough?

Mr. CHOMSKY. But I want to say the Pentagon Papers give an extremely rational, also an extremely cynical justification, up to about 1960, for an immoral or illegal intervention that would have supported long-term American interests. I do agree after 1960 things became somewhat different with the test case rhetoric and so on and so forth.

SO-CALLED ERRORS HAVE SYSTEMATIC QUALITY

Now I think it is a little unsatisfying to attribute American policy to stupidity. For one thing, the errors, so-called, have a very systematic quality. It is a fact that one of the errors, so-called, committed by the allegedly stupid leaders is that invariably, I believe invariably, I know of no counter-example, a true revolution which takes place inside the American dominated system is interpreted as being conducted by agents of the international Communist conspiracy.

Now it is very striking, and in fact the Pentagon Papers lend a lot of illumination to this. The intelligence community was assigned the responsibility in 1948 of demonstrating this thesis, of proving that Ho Chi Minh was nothing but an agent of international Communist imperialism, and it is rather amusing to run through the record. I mean if you go through the documents, and particularly in the government edition, you discover they kept trying to show it. They never were able to. They investigated all sorts of possibilities: the Bangkok legation of the U.S.S.R. or the Shanghai Tass office, or one thing or another, and they were never able to prove what they felt had to be true. that the Viet Minh were agents of international Communist aggression. And then after their total failure to establish this fact it was taken as doctrine, and stated, formulated.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that not an example of what——

Mr. CHOMSKY. I do not regard that as stupidity.

The CHAIRMAN. I see.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Not at all. Because this, you see——

Senator SYMINGTON. What would you call it?

The CHAIRMAN. What would you call it?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I would call this a very rational approach towards developing a technique of propaganda which will enlist the American population behind the opposition to indigenous communism, and I should note that that very same story has been recapitulated over and over again within the domain of American control. We have held, for example, that in Guatemala in 1954, the Arbenz regime was an agency of international Communist conspiracy. Take another case. In the Dominican Republic in 1965, the Johnson administration searched very hard for agents of the Sino-Soviet bloc and finally, I think, was able to come up with about seven of them who were, you know, over 10 years old and not dead. And then I recall once watching Eric Sevareid on television describing this new and even more insidious technique of Communist aggression, namely, smallness of numbers, which makes the United States look ridiculous and makes it harder to find the aggressors and so on and so forth. Quite the same was true in Greece, for example, in the forties. The United States claimed, contrary to available evidence, that the Greek guerrilla movement was initiated and supported by Stalin. Walt Rostow has continued to claim this over the years, never presenting any evidence. He has done it again in 1960, 1962; for all I know, he still makes this claim. The evidence, of course, is not definitive but such as exists lends no support to this theory. In fact, it indicates that Stalin was probably opposed to the Greek guerrillas and was rather satisfied with the post-war imperial settlement which gave him substantial control over the domains he wanted. In fact, we know from evidence of Djilas and others he tried to call off the Greek guerrillas, and there is reasonable speculation that he was opposed to the potential of an independent Balkan Communist system very likely of a Titoist nature which would be a counterweight to his hoped-for monolithic power.

For exactly the same reasons Stalin was always very lukewarm about Mao, when one looks over the record. I was glad to hear Mr. Schlesinger say, if I quote him exactly, that there may never have been a Sino-Soviet bloc. Well, in the late forties there is evidence, not definitive but suggestive, that Stalin was anything but enthusiastic about the triumph of Chinese communism. I do not think that he could have predicted the current level of confrontation but I think a geo-politician, if you like, would have understood that a force that was capable of unifying China under so-called Communist leadership, would ultimately refuse to bend to Russian will, would be a disruptive force in the world order that the Russians hoped to control and, in fact, would challenge their always quite fraudulent revolutionary pretentions in the so-called third world.

SYSTEMATIC ERROR IN WHAT IS ALLEGED TO BE STUPIDITY

So my point is this really: There is a highly systematic error in what is alleged to be the stupidity of the Government officials. Now that, I think, is very hard to explain on grounds of stupidity. You would expect perhaps random error if decisions were really made on the basis of stupidity but I find the error to be systematic. I think a very good first approximation to a criterion that determines which elements in foreign societies are designated as our friends, and which ones are designated as our enemies, a very reasonable first approximation is given by the principle that those forces which will maximize the openness of their society to American free entry, that means free flow of capital, free flow of investments, so on and so forth, those elements are our friends and the ones who oppose this are our enemies. And I believe if one applies this criterion one will find that it gives a remarkably accurate characterization of American policy over many years.

This explains not only why we are anti-Communist, but also why we have been anti-Fascist, rather selectively to be sure, and why we have been anti-colonialist unless the only alternative to colonialism was an indigenous Communist movement which would in fact close its society and carry out mobilization of the population in kind of a do-it-yourself, Chinese model development.

JAPAN PRIMARY MOTIVE FOR U.S. INTEREST IN INDOCHINA

Now, on the matter of the open door, I do not really agree. First of all, let me make clear, there is, I think, one point of agreement between us. I am not maintaining in any written testimony or what I stated today that the U.S. tried to conquer, I guess that is the right word, Indochina merely because of its direct interest in access to the third world. Rather, I insist it was Japan that was probably a primary motive. We were concerned from the beginning that the workshop of the Pacific would not carve out once again an independent closed co-prosperity sphere as it threatened to do in the late 1930's, possibly even accommodating to what has been called the "Stalinist bloc," perhaps posing a very serious military threat to us and certainly, of course, closing off a vast segment of potential expansion for the then projected American economic domination of the world. So Japan was probably the primary factor, and the examples I have quoted from the National Security Council memoranda and so on I think indicate that.

AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Secondly, I think it is worth pointing out although it is entirely true, as Mr. Schlesinger says, that the American investment in third world countries is slight proportional to GNP, nevertheless it is quite extensive. In fact, if you want to see how people who are interested in economic expansion view the domino theory, it is useful to read business journals. For example, if you look at the 1972 annual report of the Far Eastern Economic Review, which is a journal committed to economic liberalism, the editor, Derek Davies, has a review article of the situation in which he also derides the domino theory as total fantasy and absurd, but then he goes on to point out that East Asia is perhaps the fastest growing area of economic development in the world; that 70 percent of the investment there is American; that this investment has taken place behind the shield of American intervention in Vietnam and could not have taken place otherwise; and that there are enormous prospects for Western and Japanese business there; and that this is attributable to American courage—I have forgotten his exact word—in preserving its position in Vietnam.

Of course, he describes this sometimes in the rhetoric of providing freedom to the peasants, and so on and so forth, but these are the facts he describes and this, it seems to me, is the rational version of the domino theory: by preventing the rot from spreading, by preventing the model of development from succeeding, by maintaining the second line of defense, by preventing guerrilla forces elsewhere from undertaking similar developments, we have carved out an area where there might in the future be considerable economic expansion.

OPEN DOOR NOT MAJOR THING

As to the open door itself, again let me emphasize I do not believe American interests specifically in Indochina led us into the Indochina War. I think it is American interests in the region, very much, as I mentioned, as when Secretary Marshall formulated the domino theory in 1947 with respect to Greece; he was not really concerned with Greece, he was concerned with the farther dominoes of the Middle East. Similarly, the American domino theory in Asia. But, nevertheless, despite this it is a fact that the open door is mentioned repeatedly in the Pentagon Papers, sometimes explicitly in those words in the early years.

To give you a couple of examples, and again let me emphasize I do not think it was the major thing there: April 1945, the United States, supporting the reconstitution of French authority, urged a more liberal pattern, specifically liberalization of restrictive French economic policies for the protection of American interests.

It was urged that France move to grant autonomy to its colonies or the people may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a Pan Asiatic movement against all western powers, and it was further urged in the same statement that open door policies be pursued.

By 1946, December it was noted that the "French appear to realize no longer possible to maintain closed door here and non-French interests will have chance to participate in unquestioned rich economic possibilities."

Although the resources of Indochina in fact are repeatedly mentioned, I could give you some references——

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Chomsky, I think you made that point.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Yes.

POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION OBSTACLE TO SETTLEMENT

The CHAIRMAN. Before I yield to my colleagues, I want to bring this down to a thing you said in the beginning which I think is implicit in the testimony of both. You cited Dr. Kissinger's recent statement that the only obstacle to settlement is the political accommodation. I interpret this to mean that the acceptance of a Communist regime, no matter how it comes to power, is utterly unacceptable to this Government and that this recent move as of the day before yesterday is still based upon the same basic objectives. I am reminded when I tried to elicit from Secretary Rusk what was our objective in Vietnam—I said to him, "If we win, what do we win?" I never did get an answer of any consequence. Of course, they never accepted the idea that you are promoting: that is the fear that if we allowed Communism to develop from indigenous forces, and effective regime might be created which would be a model and an attractive one to other communities. It was always on some other basis, as you know, and certainly the domino theory as then presented was always in military terms, that is, in the sense that it would be a conquest.

Applying this to the present situation, I would like both of you to comment before I allow myself to yield to my colleagues. Is it your belief that this recent move is based upon the same assumption that we, under no circumstances, are going to permit a Communist regime to take place, whether it be by elections or by the will of the people or any other way? When the Administration saw that Vietnamization was not working—in other words, we could not succeed in creating a client regime which would allow us to do what we pleased there—then they would take this drastic action.

I would like both of you, if you would, to try to interpret, as a consequence of this inquiry, how you assess the present situation.

PRESENT SITUATION IN VIETNAM

I wonder, Dr. Schlesinger, if you would start on this since we have just heard Dr. Chomsky. What is your assessment of the present situation and is there any possibility of a political negotiated settlement of the war as it now goes on in Vietnam.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I think the present situation is discouraging evidence of the extent to which intelligence does not rule our public affairs. It seems to me President Nixon in his speeches of the last 2 weeks, including the one at the Connally barbecue, has reproduced nearly all the fallacies, with the single exception of the threat of China, that have marked the evolution of our policy during all these years.

I think that he believes them. Perhaps Mr. Chomsky would disagree. But when the President invokes the Munich analogy, when he says if we do not stand here there is going to be trouble in the Middle East, and so on, I think that is a perfectly genuine belief. It is a belief that Secretary Rusk had and it is a belief, as I said in my statement, that many people grew up with after the thirties—the notion that appeasement is the inevitable precursor of renewed aggression is one deeply implanted in their minds. I am afraid President Nixon has not recognized the extent to which the world has changed and the extent to which there is a vast difference between North Vietnam, on the one hand, and Nazi Germany, on the other.

To this degenerate idea of collective security, in which I think he honestly believes, he has added the suggestion that his personal prestige is somehow involved. He puts it outside himself a bit by talking about "respect for the office of the Presidency." What he really seems to mean is a desire to avoid what he would regard as political or personal humiliation. But with extraordinary insensitivity he is unable to see that he is trying to avoid this at the expense of inflicting comparable personal and political humiliation on other people.

Why a President of the United States should suppose that North Vietnam and the Soviet Union would find acceptable a public humiliation which he would not accept himself I cannot imagine. The effort to control foreign policy by ultimatums, of the kind that President Nixon declared on Monday night, is a very dangerous effort.

I think the fallacies in his approach are abundant. He has added, I would say, one other fallacy to his collection; and that is the notion that the Soviet Union can deliver Hanoi. This notion has always dogged him. He has never been able to understand that the age of the superpowers is over. The big states are as often captives of their client states as they are able to dominate these client states. North Vietnam is a national state which has been fighting this war for 20 years and is not going to be much deflected by the preferences of the Soviet Union or of Peking, nor indeed can the Soviet Union be expected to blackmail Hanoi by cutting off aid to it and still maintain any kind of position in the Communist world.

So I would think that this is a—on its surface—a non-starter, quite apart from the technical fact that nothing we do in mining the harbor at Hanoi is going to affect military operations by the North Vietnamese in South Vietnam for many weeks.

I think the only possible hope in this speech is in the theory that, under a mask of truculence, President Nixon proposes to beat a retreat. The only sticking point in preventing a negotiated settlement has been the belief of this Administration that the retention of a non-Communist government in Saigon is of vital interest to the U.S. Had we been willing to stand aside from the Saigon Government, I am assured by people who were involved in the Paris negotiations in 1968, we could have gotten a negotiated settlement in December 1968 or January 1969. But President Johnson was unwilling to follow the advice of Governor Harriman and Secretary Clifford, who favored standing aside from the Saigon regime. The Vietnamization policy tied the U.S. Government even more closely to the Saigon Government because Vietnamization could succeed only as the Saigon Government became stronger.

BASIS OF U.S. NEGOTIATIONS

Vietnamization and negotiation always seemed to me to be incompatible. Now Vietnamization has collapsed; and the interesting thing was that when the President listed in his speech the conditions which Hanoi must meet before he would stop mining the harbors, he did not say anything about the Saigon Government. But Mr. Chomsky tells me that in the Kissinger testimony, which I have not yet had an opportunity to read, Henry Kissinger does seem to cling still to the notion of the preservation of a reliably non-Communist government in Saigon.

As long as that is the basis of our negotiations, it seems to me our negotiating efforts are a fake because we know this result will not be accepted by the other side. For better or for worse, that is the fact of the situation. If we want a negotiated settlement we will have to stand aside from the Thieu Government and let the internal processes of South Vietnam politics, whatever they may be, yield a result which may be unpalatable to us.

The Chairman. Do you wish to comment on that briefly?

PRESENT POLICY THREATENS NUCLEAR WAR

Mr. Chomsky. Yes. I am in general agreement with this. I do believe that the present policy threatens nuclear war, and that it is wholly irrational on the ground of any interest of any segment of American society. My only difference is I would trace this irrationality to around 1960.

WHETHER SOVIET UNION CAN DELIVER HANOI

As to the question of whether the Soviet Union can deliver Hanoi, which Mr. Schlesinger raises, this is not a Nixon-Kissinger invention, and I think we should understand how deeply rooted this is in our policy. One of the most remarkable revelations in the Pentagon Papers, to my mind, is that the historians were able to discover only one staff paper, of all the intelligence agencies in a record of over two decades, that treated the North Vietnamese interests as if they might be independent, as if North Vietnam might be anything other than merely an agency of international communism.

Now, the intelligence community is paid to get the facts straight, not to talk about how Ho Chi Minh is an agent of Kremlin aggression. Yet the intelligence community, if the Pentagon Papers historians really searched the files and this is all they could find, even the intelligence community was unable to express the fact that North Vietnam, like everyone else, including the NLF, has their own interests which are often decisive. It was always assumed that somebody was controlling the North Vietnamese, it was coming from outside.

Now we are asking the Soviet Union to impose constraints in the utterly vain hope that it can call off the Vietnamese enemy, the Vietnamese resistance forces, and I think that again we may use the context of heightened confrontation to carry out a heightened escalation of the war in Vietnam, including, perhaps an amphibious Marine landing in the north or something else which might be quite intolerable to public opinion in itself but might very well be dampened, in a sense, by the great global confrontation, the missile crisis atmosphere, which it appears the President is driving toward.

ISSUE OF INTERNAL SOUTH VIETNAMESE ACCOMMODATION

Now, Henry Kissinger in the comments quoted yesterday, assuming again that the quotes are accurate, said that the only issue on which negotiations have broken down is the formation of a coalition government which will then negotiate with the PRG (Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam). In other words, the negotiations have broken down entirely on the issue of whether there will be an internal South Vietnamese accommodation.

I think, assuming he is quoted correctly, that that expresses with great clarity the weakness of the American position, and the essence of the American position over a 25-year period.

COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER THROUGH ELECTIVE PROCESS

Senator Percy. Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the answer to a very important part of your question, and I think it should be clarified for the record. A part of the question that you asked is whether or not there is a policy that our Government has adopted that we would permit a Communist government to take over through the elective process, and I think for the record——

The Chairman. Any process.

Senator Percy. And I think for the record, it should be clarified that Dean Rusk made that eminently clear and this administration has made it eminently clear that we would accept a Communist government if it were imposed by the elective process, but not by force.

Mr. CHOMSKY. If I may comment on that.

The CHAIRMAN. You may clarify it. I myself had interpreted it to mean we would not accept it.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Yes.

Senator PERCY. Statements have been made.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Statements have been made but with some interesting conditions; namely, that this victory by the Communist government has to be within the constitutional framework of Vietnam, which happens to exclude communism, and within a system of laws which happen to regard certain kinds of pro-communist activities as a crime punishable by death.

In fact, it is laws of that sort which are the legal basis for the Phoenix program of assassination and "neutralization," so-called, of Viet Cong infrastructure or political representatives of the NLF. Obviously, under those laws, Dean Rusk can say very easily that he will permit a Communist victory, namely, within a constitutional framework which does not permit them to function or talk even without being sentenced to death.

The CHAIRMAN. How do you express it?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. In the first place, I am doubtful as to what extent national elections, western style elections, express the historical and cultural processes of Vietnam. It has never seemed to me that this is necessarily a useful way of solving these problems unless it reflects customs and traditions of the country.

In addition, looked at practically, the system of repression and control which General Thieu has preserved and expanded in South Vietnam would make any such elections as much of a farce or a tragedy as the last election.

The CHAIRMAN. I had assumed you both agreed that an election completely free of our or the present government's control, would not be acceptable. This has been the sticking point all along. I assumed. Perhaps it is well that you clarified it.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE ON FOREIGN POLICY

I am going to ask this last question. Do either of you think the Congress can do anything about this in view of the almost complete embargo on communications between the Congress and the executive on foreign policy, as demonstrated as late as the day before yesterday.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I think that the Congress has been treated with contempt over the last few weeks, not to speak over the last several years. In my statement I acknowledged a certain sense of complicity myself in promoting uncritical theories of a strong Presidency that have helped shape the mood that led to this contempt for the Congress. Senator Javits and I had certain differences about the war powers bill, but, though the exact form of the bill had distressed me, I hoped that the act of the Senate in passing that bill would have a chastening effect upon the Executive. Yet the week after the Senate passed that bill, the President took new and drastic action without any form of effective congressional consultation.

Impeachment is a possible remedy, but it is entirely impractical at this stage. Perhaps members of the Senate can go to the people and make this an election issue. Given the technical obstacles to controlling an Executive who does not wish to be controlled, the only way he can be controlled is to make it clear that it is politically fatal for him if he does not undertake a degree of cooperation.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any comment on that before I yield to Senator Symington?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Only one thing, I do not know what to suggest to Congressmen. I would not presume to do so, but I think whatever they do it should be done rapidly and energetically. It is not only the fate of Indochina that hangs in the balance at this point but, it seems to me, possibly that the threat of nuclear war is to be taken quite seriously at this stage. Henry Kissinger is a man who made his academic reputation with books in which he urged that we be willing to face the risks of Armageddon in order to win limited conflicts, and I believe, as I interpret what is happening now in Government, that is precisely now what the Government is doing. The urgency of this, I do not think can be overstressed.

APPROPRIATIONS CUTOFF

Mr. SCHLESINGER. May I add one thing, I think the action of the Democratic caucus in supporting the appropriations cutoff is something that should be pressed. Also Henry Kissinger developed theories of nuclear war in the fifties but abandoned them or recanted in the sixties.

Senator JAVITS. It should be brought out that before the Democratic caucus acted this committee acted in a completely bipartisan way for a funds cut off.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Symington.

THEORY OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

Senator SYMINGTON. Dr. Schlesinger, in your statement you say something that interests me a great deal. I came into Government before the end of World War II for a few months and have stayed here every since. You can only at times wonder, how did we get into this so deeply. I often ask it of myself. I notice that you say, "Thus arose the counterinsurgency mystique" and then go on to talk about the origin of the theory of flexible response.

Some time ago another member of the White House staff of Presdent Kennedy and I were talking about this flexible response business. Most of my Government experience has been in connection with the military. It seems that here you have hit something very important. I asked him about it, flexible response, and I found he had apprehensions about it also.

It seems the suggestions you have at the end of your statement justify your apprehension, because these would not have to be suggested if it was not for this new concept of flexible response. One of the saddest things that has happened, to the country, in my opinion, is the secrecy surrounding nuclear power. It has prevented much of the use of that power which would also help us with the prevention of pollution and waste. I have said before that in a 6-day visit to Europe with the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee, I learned more about the true military power than in 18 years on the Armed Services Committee and a decade on this committee. I would ask you, do you believe in the theory of flexible response? It is a difficult question, but after all, who is going to attack the United States with some 5,700 nuclear warheads, Polaris submarines, et cetera. Reading other points you make at the end of your statment, why do we have to have this concept of Pax Americana when anybody who attacked us today knows they would be committing suicide?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Let me answer that as frankly as I can. I was strongly in favor of the concept of flexible response in the fifties and in the sixties, early sixties. It seemed to me we were in a dangerous situation when the only alternatives we faced if there were a military challenge would be either the use of nuclear weapons or no response at all. Therefore, I strongly supported the new strategy that Secretary McNamara brought in.

His purpose in doing so, as we all remember, was to create alternatives to nuclear warfare in Europe, and that seemed to me at the time of the Berlin crisis of 1961 and so on, a useful thing to do. It seemed to me then the more military options, that existed, the better the chance of avoiding the resort to nuclear warfare.

I think that in retrospect, the more options that were created the greater the temptation to use them. Had we stuck to the more rigid and, to my mind, less intellectually defensible "massive retaliation" strategy we would not have diversified our forces in such a way as to enable us easily to undertake the Vietnam adventure. It would not have excluded it because as we showed at the time of Korea we could, if necessary, put forces on the field quickly; but it was much easier when, as in Vietnam, we had well diversified forces in being.

Moreover, in 1961 there was crisis in Central Europe. Today if Willy Brandt can get his treaties through the Bundestag we may be entering a period where there will be, in effect a settlement of the territorial issues raised in the Second World War. This, too, seems to me to reduce the need for forces prepared to leap in at the drop of a hat.

I am not an expert on the defense budget: but it would seem to me that, so long as we maintain a nuclear deterrent which can survive a first strike, our need for conventional diversified forces is now much reduced. The existence of such forces creates a temptation which I am not sure is beyond our capacity to resist.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you.

Dr. Chomsky, would you comment?

WHERE LIMITED WARS WILL BE FOUGHT

Mr. CHOMSKY. Yes, I have a rather different approach to that question, a somewhat more skeptical one. I think we should ask ourselves where those limited wars are to be fought, where is the limited response to be exercised, where is counter-insurgency to take place. I do not believe that it would be in the slightest bit realistic to assume that it will happen in Berlin. A real confrontation between the great powers so far as I can see, would have every probability of escalating very rapidly to a high level nuclear confrontation.

On the other hand, limited wars will be fought in countries like Vietnam.

USE OF THEORY OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

The technology of counter-insurgency will be used in Latin America, and in my view, the theory of limited war, flexible response, and counter-insurgency, was an effort, very much like those I discussed earlier, to find a way to enlist the popular support of the American people for the very costly effort of crushing indigenous movements in the areas where the limited wars would be fought; enlisting their support by making it appear to be somehow a matter of great power conflict which, of course, every American citizen must be very seriously concerned with.

I do not see any way now or in 1958 at the time of the Draper Committee discussions, that this whole ideology or technology had anything to do with our conflicts, which are quite real, with our great power rivals. They had to do with our efforts to maintain control of weak societies, and the same is true of much of the technology that is being developed today, as I see it.

Consider, for example, the automated battlefield which General Westmoreland is so happy about and which costs billions of dollars. Nobody believes that the Soviet Union can be strewn with detectors and sensors and that we can have helicopters flying over it sending signals to central computers. Ridiculous. This is the kind of technology that can be used in wars against the weak. I think this is characteristic of this whole system of flexible response, and, incidentally, again the Soviet Union mirrors us on this matter.

PRICE OF GOLD

Senator SYMINGTON. Right now we are talking about the political, military, economic, and moral problems incident to this recent escalation. I noticed in this morning's paper that the price of gold was over $54 an ounce in London. We raised the monetary price of gold from $35 to $38, but at the same time it must be remembered convertability was suspended last August. Now it is clear the $38 price is fictitious based on the actual gold price. One expression going out of our language is that the dollar is as good as gold.

DIVERSION OF U.S. RESOURCES AND ENERGIES

If we are going to do the things now everybody increasingly realizes we must do at home so as to keep the people believing in the system, I do not see how we can continue to stand this gigantic cost. Would you comment?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I think that is accurate. As I said before, I am opposed to American imperial intervention when it succeeds or when it fails but the fact of the matter is that from 1965 at least—we could argue about the earlier years, but at least from 1965 the intervention seems to me largely irrational and increasingly wholly irrational on whatever cynical motivations one wants to accept. Well, just consider, for example, our trade relationships with Japan, the trade balance with Japan which everyone is really upset about, and properly so. That trade balance shifted in 1965. Until then we always had a favorable trade balance with Japan. The weakening of American capitalism with respect to its industrial rivals dates very precisely from this period, and at this point, even earlier, as I said, but certainly at this point the war lost its rational imperial motivations, which I disapproved of, and became irrational. This is, of course, not the first time in the history of empire that a great empire has torn itself to pieces by the irrational insistence of winning local wars and draining its energies and its resources in doing so.

Senator SYMINGTON. Dr. Schlesinger, would you comment?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Yes, sir, I absolutely agree with you. I think much of our domestic troubles, and much of our incapacity to deal with them, has been a consequence of the diversion both of resources and attention to what, so far as the interests of the United States are concerned, is a purely marginal and local problem on the other side of the world. The domestic economic consequences of Vietnam and the international economic consequences of Vietnam, horrifying as is the slaughter and destruction, are another price this country will pay for some time.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Percy.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment first on the quality of the hearings we have had and the testimony. I think both papers make a great contribution to our understanding of this problem, and certainly I think the staff and the Chair in calling these hearings at this particular time, not knowing how important they would be, had a great deal of foresight.

WHETHER VIET CONG WERE INDIGENOUS

Professor Chomsky, you describe the Viet Cong as indigenous. Was not the Viet Cong organized by people who went north after 1954? Although they obviously had local support, was not the control ultimately from Hanoi?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, in the years up to 1959 there was no return, to anyone's knowledge, of any southern regroupees. The southern regroupees according to American intelligence, began returning in 1959. According to the Pentagon Papers history, questionable in my opinion, it was determined by a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of North Vietnam in May 1959. However, in March 1959, President Diem already said that he had an Algerian war on his hands and, in fact, the level of insurgency was extremely high at that point. Let me, rather than go on with this, just simply refer to what is probably the most outstanding source on it, a recent study by Jeffrey Race, "War Comes to Long An," the most extensive study on this matter, which shows quite clearly that the insurgency was very much in progress, an indigenous war, in 1959; that the southern regroupees then gave a good deal of substance to it as they returned to their own areas and took part in the insurgency, which I see no way of objecting to frankly, and then by 1965 the North Vietnamese came in. Roughly, that is the picture.

HO CHI MINH'S OFFER TO U.S. OF ECONOMIC ROLE IN VIETNAM

Senator PERCY. I happen to concur with the conclusions that Dr. Schlesinger has come to on the economic goals. But, Professor Chomsky, Ho Chi Minh offered the U.S. a prime economic role in Vietnam 1944 through 1964. Why, if we were so interested in economic advantage according to you, did we not seize this opportunity?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Because it was recognized, as Dean Acheson put it very clearly, that Ho Chi Minh is a Communist and, therefore, everything else is irrelevant. The point is that an outside industrial power can have only a very limited, and not a very profitable, role in the development of what is called a Communist society. What is now called communism, which in my opinion has not much to do with traditional communism, is a system of independent development, mobilization of the population, a society using its own resources for internal development, not orienting itself toward either the world market or toward the needs of the industrial powers. I think that was understood and it was for that reason that, in a sense, rationally, Ho Chi Minh's offer was rejected.

U.S. ECONOMIC POLICY TOWARD EASTERN EUROPE

Senator PERCY. Here we have a strange case of a United States, pre-eminent economically, supposedly obsessed by economic goals, and yet is it not true today that the same Neanderthal thinking prevails and has permitted us to get into a condition to exclude ourselves essentially from the fastest growing markets in the world in Eastern Europe, where today we are doing $350 million worth of business, and the rest of the western world is doing $8 billion worth of business in the very kind of items that we are able to supply. They would like to buy from us, but we simply have let politics becloud our thinking. Is not this same mentality really true today?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, I would only very partially agree with that. I agree it is irrational from an economic point of view to refuse to trade with Eastern Europe and that is a case, one of the cases, where ideology overcame rational self-interest.

But still, the major concern of any capitalist power, in my opinion, for economic development elsewhere will not merely be in trade, it will be in investment, it will be in the possibilities of expanding industry, even of exporting industry overseas. For example, one of the things we are doing in Asia is exporting American productive capacity. Naturally it will flow toward places where wages are lower and where industrial unrest can be controlled, and so on and so forth. Investment, access to strategic materials, to raw materials, opportunities for placing industrial capacity overseas, the use of the labor force overseas, all of these things are very important to an expanding industrial power, and though trade is one of those many factors it is by no means the only one.

American policy was based on the feeling that we could somehow prevent the closing off of these areas in other respects, if we only stopped trading with them. That could not have been the case and it is not the case but, of course, even the fullest trade with, say, Eastern Europe would still be of only limited interest to an expanding industrial capitalist power.

LITTLE EVIDENCE OF ECONOMIC CONCERN IN PENTAGON PAPERS

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Could I comment just briefly on a couple of these? I will not repeat why I do not think that the economic factors played much role or why I think our vital economic relationships are with industrialized and not non-industrialized countries. I do think it is interesting in such vast volume of paper as the Pentagon documents there is so little evidence of economic concern. It is necessary to pull out of context a few statements and most of them have to do with the situation of Japan and not of American capitalism.

U.S. POLICY IN VIETNAM BASED ON EUROPEAN REASONS

I would add that, so far as the decisions of 1944, 1945, 1946 were concerned, they were made by a United States which was focusing on Europe, and the real reason I think as to why we acquiesced in the British-French imperial determination—the British determination to put the French back and the French determination to go back into Indochina—was because of our concern with the French situation in Europe. We were persuaded by the French Government's statements that the loss of Indochina would be a great blow to them, that it would weaken them. And, given the very chancey and precarious situation in Europe in 1947, 1948, particularly in the year just before the Marshall Plan, we went along for that reason. In other words, our policy in Vietnam was based, in that period, essentially on European reasons rather than on Asian reasons.

INITIATIVES TO EXPAND TRADE WITH COMMUNIST WORLD

Senator PERCY. I presume both of you would support the initiatives being taken now to expand trade with the Communist world.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Yes.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. OK by me.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA

The CHAIRMAN. Will the Senator yield for a question on that point? How do you explain the completely adamant attitude toward any review of our policy toward Cuba? The only explanation I see here is the one you have been giving. I introduced a resolution and had a hearing on it, but the administration absolutely did not want to even review it. They do not want us to review it. They want it to stay exactly where it is. This is a strange thing to me.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, the Alliance for Progress was an effort to contain the "ideological expansion" of Cuba, the influence of its possible success. I would suggest that if one could look in on the internal papers of the administration they would show a deep concern that the Castro regime might be reversed.

The CHAIRMAN. If they succeeded.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Certainly it would be likely to succeed with normal relations with its industrial——

The CHAIRMAN. And it assumes automatically that is inherently bad, is that correct?

Mr. CHOMSKY. It assumes it is automatically bad when it occurs in Cuba, in the Dominican Republic, anywhere in the American controlled world.

The CHAIRMAN. Why is it not bad when it succeeds in Rumania or Bulgaria or Russia?

Mr. CHOMSKY. It was considered bad there. In fact, in the early period when you look back at 1943 and 1944——

The CHAIRMAN. How do you reconcile that with our attitude toward China and Russia, and here the Senator is talking about better trade which I am for. I cannot understand why this reasoning would not apply to Cuba as well as the others.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, I think so, except the administration has apparently given up the long-held hope that China would undergo an internal collapse. After all, this hope was held certainly by our State Department officials, it was expressed to me many times in the late sixties, that China would undergo an internal collapse and become a society of warlords and, you remember, people like Joe Alsop in 1962 were predicting a descending spiral which would lead to the disintegration of the regime, and on this basis it was assumed we should do our best to try to contribute to the inability of China to undertake internal development.

I think by now that hope has been largely lost and other sorts of relations have grown up.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. As a cigar smoker I have long been for improving relations with Cuba. Mr. Chomsky said he could not think of revolution, which we did not immediately identify as Communist and did not try to subvert or prevent. There have been, of course, some in Latin America, the Bolivian revolution of 1952 which nationalized the tin mines and which was even accepted by a business dominated administration, the Eisenhower administration. Actually, when the Cuban revolution itself took place, there was considerable reluctance on our part to say it was Communist, so much so that Ambassador Earl Smith had written a very bitter book denouncing the Eisenhower State Department for not recognizing this, as he thought, as a Communist revolution.

I can remember Castro coming to Cambridge, Mass., in 1959 and speaking at the Harvard stadium. He was introduced by McGeorge Bundy.

The revolution in Peru in 1966 has imposed all sorts of limitations—of a kind I generally support—on the activities of American firms. No one has called this revolution Communist, so I think there have been a number of instances where such revolutions have not produced what Mr. Chomsky described as an invariable and automatic American reaction.

Mr. CHOMSKY. I think Mr. Schlesinger misheard what I said. I did not say we put down any revolution which appeared anywhere. We did not, for example, put down the Chinese revolution, to take a better case, but I said a good criterion to determine what we do is that those elements in other societies which are most amenable to opening that society to American penetration are the ones we will support; and that was exactly the case, for example, in the Bolivian revolution. Eisenhower, quite intelligently on his assumption, supported the most right wing group that had any chance of popular support, and in 10 years that policy was successful and——

Mr. SCHLESINGER. He accepted the success of the revolution.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Which was the group that headed, the most right wing——

VIETNAM POLICY OF KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Senator PERCY. Suppose we get back to the question. In your testimony you indicated in a very candid statement that Vietnam policy was not the Kennedy administration's finest hour. When the Kennedy administration took office in early 1961, the U.S. military presence in South Vietnam was about what the Geneva Accords allowed, 685 men, and yet by May 1961 President Kennedy approved the deployment to Vietnam of about 400 special forces, that is troops, and initiated a covert war campaign against North Vietnam.

As a member of that administration, and an important official within it, can you shed any light as to why President Kennedy and his top advisers thought that this important escalation, significant escalation of U.S. involvement was necessary or desirable?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I can shed no light on it beyond what appears in the Pentagon Papers. I was not involved myself in——

Senator PERCY. From what you do know, can you give me the background? Were you associated with the administration at that time?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I was associated. I was too busy planning the Bay of Pigs. [Laughter.]

I can only speculate that, as the Pentagon Papers suggest, there was a feeling that the situation was getting worse and that it could be stiffened by the insertion of a small number of American troops. There was a gathering counterinsurgency mystique, a pernicious illusion that influenced the Kennedy administration. President Kennedy was mostly concerned during that period not with Vietnam but with Laos. He was trying to reverse the policy of the Eisenhower administration on Laos; he was trying to bring Souvanna Phouma, whom the State Department regarded as a Communist, back into the picture. This applies, I think, to Senator Fulbright's question about Cuba; changing a policy, as we all know, is extremely difficult, when the bureaucracy has a vested interest in the policy. The internal opposition to changing the policy on Laos was very intense. It took Averell Harriman, a man of considerable persistence, a year to turn it back.

Senator PERCY. Why did the administration feel they would succeed when the French had failed?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Because when you look at the figures in 1961, there were at that point, according to the embassy briefings in Saigon, 15,000 Vietcong, and there were 250,000 government troops. In a situation like that it was supposed that it would be rather easy to teach the government troops a few tricks and they could take care of themselves.

Senator PERCY. How did they explain, with this great disparity of forces, the inability of the South Vietnamese to cope with the situation?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Well, they never did explain it because there were differences within the Kennedy administration on that point. The first sending of American advisers took place in 1962, and for a time the policy seemed to be working. Even the Communists called 1962 Diem's year. There were those like Harriman, Roger Hilsman, and Michael Forrestal in the White House who were very dubious as to the depth of this success and very dubious about the strategic hamlet program. They felt the problem was essentially political rather than military. But this was the year of the Cuban missile crisis and many other things, and the Pentagon was handling Vietnam. It was a great mistake to permit the question to be defined as a military question.

DIEM REGIME

Senator PERCY. Can you give us an insight as to discussions that might have been carried on at the time within the administration as to the strengthens and the fragility of the regime that Diem had imposed on the country?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Harriman and Hilsman were very skeptical of the strength of the regime. Our general and our ambassador, General Harkins and Ambassador Nolting, were very confident of the strength of the regime. The newspaper stories were far more accurate than the top secret cables, and I have often believed our Vietnam policy would be much better off if during the Kennedy administration no one had ever opened a top secret cable from Saigon and instead read the New York Times and Newsweek. I have been skeptical every since about Vietnam intelligence.

Senator PERCY. Can you add anything to the character of the popular support or the viability of the Diem regime in your own judgment at that time?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I do not think so. I think I was as much influenced by Governor Harriman and also by Ambassador Galbraith, who stopped over at Saigon from time to time, and I was absolutely persuaded they were right in thinking the regime had a very insecure basis and that it was not democratic in any sense. However, that case did not have the conclusive visible proof it required until the Buddhists riots in the spring of 1963, at which point it was suddenly recognized that the Harriman analysis was more correct than the Pentagon analysis.

WHETHER HISTORIANS WERE CALLED UPON

Senator PERCY. We have called upon the historians now in hindsight to give us a perspective of what went on. President Kennedy had a great interest in history and a knowledge of it. Can you tell us from your own knowledge the input that was called upon, whether historians were called upon, to give an insight to the administration at that time when we were making policy decisions as to the very nature of the Vietnam situation—whether they had an insurgency or civil war situation on their hands?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. So far as I know—I do not know about the intelligence branch of the CIA but so far as I know—no scholars were called upon to give their ideas about it. Indeed, there were very few courses given in American universities about Vietnam; very few people knew about Vietnam; very few people had experience in the country. I think decisions were taken in an atmosphere of invincible ignorance compounded by the fact, as I mentioned earlier, that the State Department had been purged of those people who at least knew China very well, and who would have served as the equivalents of our people like Bohlen, Thompson and Harriman with regard to the Soviet Union.

As I say, I think the intellectual presumption involved in our Vietnam intervention was extraordinary, and our ignorance was invincible and inexcusable.

WHEN HAVE WESTERN POWERS SUCCEEDED IN SITUATIONS LIKE VIETNAM?

Senator PERCY. Has there ever been a situation in your opinion, where Western powers have succeeded in meeting a situation similar to that in Vietnam?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Well, I suppose there have been situations in the 19th century before nationalism became crystalized and hardened as it has since become. There have been situations where a Western state has been in a country for decades or centuries; the Portuguese are still hanging on in Angola and Mozambique and have been there for a long time. But for the Americans to come into Vietnam, a country which they knew practically nothing about, where none of them spoke Vietnamese, few of them even spoke French, does represent an unusual act in history.

Senator PERCY. Were the example of the British in Malaya and the Huks in the Philippines used by the Kennedy administration at all as examples of success, or did they feel that the Vietnam situation was entirely different?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. No, they were, I think, misled by such successes. Of course, in 1961 there was a certain analogy perhaps between Malaya and Vietnam in the size of the forces involved, though in Malaya there was the ethnic differentiation which did not exist in Vietnam.

But success in the Philippines was made possible by a combination of military action and social reform. That, too, was important and indeed, as President Kennedy envisaged counter-insurgency, it was a program of social reform. This was unrealistic because counter-insurgents are not ordinarily social reformers.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I have a number of other questions but I would like to yield to my colleagues.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Pell?

Senator PELL. I thank the Senator from Illinois for his courtesy.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESS

I admire highly Professor Schlesinger because he has the quality of making history simple. I think so many historians complicate it and there are few men like him, Toynbee and others, can make difficult ideas lucid and one that we can follow.

HISTORICAL ANALOGY TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Now following up this same question of Senator Percy's, I am wondering if from your broad knowledge of history, sweep of history, you could give us an analogy to where we are today. I think every single idea is repetitious, and, as a rule, every event is repetitious—there is very little that is new in the world and very few situations that have not occurred before. I am obviously reminded of the Roman general who on conquering Carthage said, "We have a victory but it is a desert." But that is a military comment.

I wonder if you saw any historical analogy to where we are today in the past cycles of history as Toynbee pointed out we are in the 19th.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I am rather distrustful of historical analogy. I do think, though, it can be said that powers can develop illusions of growing strength and over-reach themselves and get into trouble. Then if they have any vitality and sobriety, they learn from that and moderate their ambitions.

I think the process of declination, so to speak, from being a super power to being just another power is a difficult one. It is one the British had to go through after the Second World War. It is one that countries that lost great wars like Germany, Italy and Japan have had to go through. It is one which we must go through, more on the British model than on the other. We must understand that the pretentions that have animated our foreign policy do not correspond to the realities of either our wisdom or our power, and we must divest ourselves of self-righteousness in our rhetoric and in our attitude toward the world.

CONTRIBUTION OF COMMITTEE

The process is painful; and I think this committee has contributed to the criticism and reevaluation of American power and its purposes.

Senator PELL. I agree with you. It is our chairman and his hearings which really provided the backdrop after the abdication of President Johnson to make "peace" a good word and also "appeasement," which was not a good word when the chairman first organized these hearings.

HAS U.S. POLICY CHANGED WITHOUT REALIZING IT?

I am wondering if you have any thought as to the reasons for the turn in our policy that we have not perceived in our Nation, but which certainly has taken place—now our empathy is automatically extended to those nations who are conservative or militaristic and opposed to those who are liberal, revolutionary or civilian. I just used the analogy of various aid programs now where the various tax dollars are going when we recognize a new country. I think we have changed our policy without realizing it. I was wondering, one, whether either of you gentlemen would agree with that statement and, two, what your view is with regard to the correctness from the viewpoint of our national interest.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Consistent with what I said before, I do not think we changed our policy. I think we are just continuing it. For example, Senator Church's subcommittee recently explored the situation in

Brazil, and discovered that our aid to Brazil shot up very rapidly after the 1964 coup, "revolution" it is called there, which opened Brazil to foreign investment, which also shot up rapidly. And as the AID director testified, it was primarily for the benefit of providing a favorable climate for investments, that the United States spent $2 billion in aid to protect an investment of $1.7 billion. There are many instances, it is well to remember, where the United States has carried out policies like those in Vietnam but it has won. We entered Vietnam in a serious way in the late forties. That was right after the experience of Greece where counter-insurgency had succeeded in putting down a mass based indigenous movement rather like the Vietnam situation in many respects.

In Korea, in 1945, though the situation was not entirely analogous it is close enough to be significant. When the American soldiers landed in Korea in 1945 they found a functioning Korean Government with Communist participation and much leadership as in every country where there had been a resistance. It took 5 years to dismantle that government, to wipe out the labor unions, to institute the regime of Syngman Rhee, which is in some ways like that of Diem, a right wing nationalist regime, not like General Thieu but like Diem. The American policy was a success, incidentally. It turned the struggle into a regional conflict as was attempted somewhat later in Indochina.

One could go on to list other cases where it seems to me essentially the same policy is acting itself out. We are trying to protect the "openness" of the society and protect these groups that will maximally offer us free access, using aid, counter-insurgency, every possible means that is open to us. Sometimes we overreach as in Vietnam in 1965, where it no longer seems that we can crush the mass force as we succeeded in Greece.

Senator PELL. But as a rule, do you not agree if we give them the choice between giving aid to a more conservative or more liberal government at this time, we tend to give the aid to the more conservative government as a nation, and my point is our Government policy has changed without our people realizing it.

Mr. CHOMSKY. I do not really see that.

Senator PELL. You do not?

Mr. CHOMSKY. No.

Senator PELL. Greece, Brazil.

Mr. CHOMSKY. These are countries—we would be delighted to have them run free elections. I do not think it would make us stop sending aid as long as they keep the investment climate open.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. May I comment on this?

Senator PELL. Yes.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I do not think there is any transcendent necessity that compels us to distinguish between right and leftwing governments and I do not think historically we have done so. It must be remembered during the height of the cold war we found ourselves in a very stringent situation with a lot of terrible regimes on our side: but nonetheless during the Truman administration we had the friendliest possible relations with the democratic socialist regimes of Western Europe. With the Kennedy administration the whole point of the Alliance for Progress was an effort to strengthen democratic governments and parties in Latin America. In both those cases there were strong forces to the right of the governments which we preferred. I remember particularly the wailing and complaint from American business about how the Alliance for Progress was supporting people that they did not feel were interested in creating the investment climate of which Mr. Chomsky spoke.

So I think these things depend upon the character and purposes of the Administration and in the context of the times.

Senator PELL. Thank you.

MEETING OF HISTORIANS TO EXAMINE CAUSES OF COLD WAR

One final question, request for comment really, I noticed in the press over the weekend there was a meeting of historians under your auspices and that in examining the causes of the Vietnam War——

Mr. SCHLESINGER. The cold war.

Senator PELL. I am sorry, the cold war. I was wondering if you could capsulize the opinion of that group of scholars.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I do not think there was any consensus. It was a group consisting of both former Government officials and historians. A number of the historians were revisionists. To make a very quick summary, I think that the revisionists had a certain impact on the others by making it necessary to see much more systematically than we have in the past how the situation looked from the point of view of the Soviet Union. When one does that it is possible to see that acts which each side undertook on what it considered defensive grounds were perceived by the other as intolerably offensive and threatening, and that it was that kind of misconception and misperception that played a large role in the transforming what had been a conflict of struggle among nations into a holy war.

On the other hand, I think the revisionist economic thesis—that, for example, we undertook the cold war in order to get investment opportunities in Eastern Europe—is something for which they provided no evidence and which was generally rejected.

Senator PELL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator from New York.

Senator JAVITS. Thank you.

IS U.S. REALLY PULLING OUT OF WAR?

Mr. Schlesinger, based upon yours and Professor Chomsky's knowledge and views of history, do you think there is anything to the theory that the President is now engaged in some ploy on a global basis, that all of this really is action for the public to digest, and that behind the scenes we are really pulling out of the Vietnam War? And we who feel so strongly about his pulling out are prevailing, although we do not know it?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Well, I think anything is possible. It may be possible, as I mentioned earlier, that the belligerence of the speech was a cover-up for a cave-in. I wish I could really believe that. We will know soon enough. It seems a possibility; but, given the tone of the speech and its general continuity with President Nixon's attitude on other occasions, it seems to me a possibility but not a probability.

Senator JAVITS. What do you think, Professor Chomsky?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I agree. I would be delighted if it were true and I eagerly await some evidence for it but I do not see very much. In particular, Kissinger's press conference yesterday seems to me to make it most improbable.

Senator JAVITS. I must say, gentlemen, that I agree with you. I think all of this is speculation which can only paralyze such action of which we are capable. I feel, and I would certainly welcome any comment from you, that great nations cannot bluff. If they try it they can get in terrible trouble, do you agree with that?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I would agree with that. What was it Theodore Roosevelt said?—never bluff unless you are ready to shoot.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

Senator JAVITS. One other thing I would like to ask you, as I was not here when you may have developed it and you both know my deep interest, of the role that Congress can play.

It has always seemed to me if the war powers bill were law we would have even in this situation a position if an extension of the present struggle was so great as to constitute a new order of hostilities; i.e., an invasion of the north, for example, and that may still be. If we had the bill on the books a very strong case could be made that the mining of Haiphong Harbor is really new, a new war, but in the absence of this law, and considering the fact that climatically, as you have said, Professor Schlesinger, the war powers bill does not seem to have convinced the President that he had better pay some attention to its procedural philosophy now even though it is not the law. Do you feel that, and again in light of historical experience and precedent, that the fund cut-off route is the only route open to us, except, as you said, an appeal to the country or in the election campaign? But from the point of view of the Congress, is there anything else that either of you can see, other than the fund cut-off route, absent some generic law like the war powers bill or some adaptation of it?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I do not know what happens when members of this body are invited to the White House for a briefing.

The CHAIRMAN. They are not. [Laughter.]

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I do not know what would happen if a deputation of this committee of senior Senators requested a meeting of the President and said in the most urgent and sombre way you are concerned about these matters.

The CHAIRMAN. Will the Senator yield? I will explain that remark. The day before yesterday at the Democratic caucus the leadership voted unanimously to instruct the majority leader to ask the relevant chairman and ranking members of the committees and the minority leader, Senator Scott joined, to send a letter requesting a meeting with the President. That meeting did not take place until immediately before the broadcast. There was absolutely no consultation, none whatsoever.

Senator JAVITS. You know, if the President will not see us, no matter how eminent our delegation, we will have to find some way of dealing with that, but give us your opinion as to what you see we can do, even though, as our chairman properly says, perhaps we tried it and it has not worked but, nonetheless, the full catalog of what you see we can do could be very valuable to us.

Mr. Chomsky. Well, look, I think there are a lot of things that Senators can do, up to civil disobedience, for that matter.

PRESIDENT'S APPEAL FOR UNITY

I think the President appealed in his speech for unity of the American people. That is necessary for the bluff he is trying to carry off and incidentally, I am not sure it is a bluff. I mean, I do not know what he will do if Russian ships start loading and unloading 2 miles away from Haiphong on the beach. I think you have to show him that unity is not there but there is a real commitment to stop it, and that kind of commitment can be shown in many ways. If that commitment is not shown I do not think he is going to pay any attention to congressional resolutions.

PRESIDENT'S DISREGARD OF LEGISLATION

In fact, I was interested to notice that Chairman Fulbright pointed out on the floor of the Senate back on October 3rd or 4th, I think, and Senator Symington agreed, as I recall, that one might actually raise the question of whether there was any point in being a Senator of the United States if the President is simply going to disregard explicit legislation. The context at that time was the bringing of Thai mercenaries to Laos. After a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which I found most astonishing, in which Alexis Johnson testified that the Government interpreted the law limiting forces there to local Lao forces, he interpreted the law as permitting Australians, Cambodians, Thais, anybody they could bring in. They were all local Lao forces. I think it is a small incident but a revealing one. It means that unless there will be some kind of demonstration, and I do not know what kind to suggest, a real commitment to insist upon the observance of congressional legislation, and to respond to the popular will as reflected in Congress or, for that matter, outside, then the country will continue to go through what in a sense amounts to a series of executive coups, rejection of popular opinion, of congressional opinion, even of explicit legislation in certain cases.

PROPOSITION THAT 70 PERCENT OF COUNTRY BACKS PRESIDENT'S ACTION

Senator Javits. What do you say, Professor Schlesinger, I would like to have you answer that in just a remark, if you will, what do you say to the proposition that is always waved at us that 70 percent of the country backs the President's action?

Mr. Schlesinger. Well, I doubt very much that is so and even if it is so it should not restrain those who disagree from expressing disagreement. There is an automatic tendency when the President undertakes a new military venture to rally around the flag for a moment; but my own guess is the American people are fed up with this war. They might have believed President Nixon when he said invasion of Cambodia would have a decisive effect or when he said that American aerial support for the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos might have a decisive effect or even when he said the resumption of the bombing of North Vietnam would have a decisive effect; but after a time they are bound to recognize the futility of escalation. I think Ray Clapper was right when he said: Never underestimate the intelligence of the American people or overestimate the amount of information they have.

President Nixon does not command the confidence of the American people in such a way as to have his every view automatically accepted. I think the Senators who have shown themselves far more right than the Executive on this question of Vietnam also have strong constituencies over the country and can make a counterveiling effort. Maybe a group of you should go on television.

WHAT ELSE CAN CONGRESS DO?

Senator Javits. We have gotten a little away from the subject. You both agree that one thing members can do is to utilize their prestige for public declaration in one form or another. What else can we do? The funds cut-off I have named, what else, is there anything else that you can suggest?

Mr. Chomsky. Personally I would be strongly in favor of a move for impeachment knowing that it cannot succeed, simply because it would somehow symbolize the intensity of the commitment to avoid a nuclear war, let us say, or other steps that are threatening.

Mr. Schlesinger. A large vote against impeachment would be interpreted as an endorsement of the President and support of his actions.

Mr. Chomsky. That depends on how it is done. Let us not deceive the population of the country about the strength of antiwar sentiment. One should be direct about it. There is a certain degree of power in the Senate. It is true that a strong Executive can always for a very brief period rally popular support in what will appear to be moments of peril and danger and so on. But I think the credibility of this administration and earlier ones has sunk to the point where this is very brief, very transitory, and the powers of the Senate are probably greater than one realizes at this stage.

Senator Javits. Well, I believe the powers of impeachment are powers that are not to be utilized in the event of differences of view on national policy no matter how deep. Remember that you are historians, and although we may disagree with the President's policy, it is a deeply held view of policy by him.

He is up for election this fall. So I frankly doubt very much that there is anything to the impeachment remedy or that it is even in order. and notwithstanding the depth of our disagreement. I just do not think that impeachment is in the ball park of American political life and tradition. Impeachment is for other things. high crimes and misdemeanors, tyranny and so on. and many may define it as such, but I am sorry, I cannot. I still think, no matter how deep, it is a very profound difference as to what ought to be the policy of our country. It could be gravely jeopardizing to our country, but then there were those who wanted to impeach FDR when he gave the British the destroyers on the same claim of authority, so if we are going to jump to impeachment every time we do have this basic difference, I think impeachment will be held awfully cheap.

Mr. Chomsky. I do not agree, and the reason is that the present acts are very different from giving destroyers. I think there are very good strong grounds, which Congress or someone should pursue, for believing that very serious crimes, violation of American and international law, have been committed and continually are being committed. I do not see, for example, how the destruction of northern Laos under the Nixon-Kissinger administration in secret—largely brought out by subcommittees of this committee—how it could be interpreted as anything other than a violation of treaties to which we are a party of the supreme law of the land, and I think the continued escalation of the war also falls in this category.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CHOICE IN PENTAGON PAPERS CASE

Now, unfortunately, take the case of the Pentagon Papers as a striking example. The Justice Department had a choice: it might have gone ahead, as it did, to try to prosecute the release of the papers, or it had an alternative, to try to investigate the possible criminal conspiracy to engage the country in an aggressive war that is revealed by the papers.

Now it is very striking that in the case of information that was released giving evidence—we can debate its sufficiency but not its existence—but giving some evidence of really criminal acts, the Justice Department proceeded not to investigate and perhaps prosecute the criminal acts, let alone terminate them, but to prosecute the release of those facts to the public. This is a case where the system really has failed. I mean, clearly the Justice Department will protect the inheritors of policies rather than try to prevent, to prosecute possible criminal acts that were conducted by them. Here I think another forum is needed, a forum to investigate the question whether the American intervention in Vietnam since 1960, certainly since 1965, and certainly now is not, strictly speaking, criminal.

HAS SYSTEM BROKEN DOWN AND FAILED?

Senator Javits. Professor Chomsky, I do not want to take your wonderful mind off our alternatives, but if you will allow me to just add something to what you just said about the Pentagon Papers. Is it not a fact in sustaining our system that the Department is not the last word? Sure, you can indict, you can sue but, so long as there are courts who will redress it, you cannot say the system has broken down and failed.

Mr. Chomsky. No. I am sorry, I would say the system has broken down and failed at this point and I do not see the remedy. The system has broken down because of the selective prosecution. You see, the Government may lose the case, as it lost the Harrisburg conspiracy case, as it failed in its effort at prior restraint of the Times, but it is not prosecuting or investigating or indicting, let alone deterring those who may be guilty of the crimes revealed in the Pentagon Papers.

Senator Javits. There is going to be an election this fall and if the people want another Attorney General and another approach they will have the opportunity to do that.

Mr. CHOMSKY. But that is not the way crimes are supposed to be treated.

Senator JAVITS. Well——

Mr. CHOMSKY. And furthermore, a second point in connection with that is not only is the Government failing to investigate, let alone prosecute. the real crimes, the substantive crimes, but furthermore, it is important to remember that the power of the Government to indict, to subpena, to try, constitutes punishment. I know this myself. I have been involved with the Pentagon Papers grand jury in an effort, so far successful to refuse to testify before the grand jury because I think the investigation is improper, for the reason I just mentioned. Well, so far the courts have worked for me. I have been excused from testifying on grounds of wiretapping and so forth. I have also been punished. I have been punished to the tune of several thousand dollars and a great deal of time and energy, and the same thing was true, far more so, of the Harrisburg Seven. The Government lost, but the Harrisburg Seven lost much more severely. They do not have the resources, their supporters do not have the time, and the same thing will be true in the case of the Pentagon Papers. So in two respects the system has failed badly; one, failure to prosecute substantive crimes and, two, prosecution which appears to fail but nevertheless punishes individuals.

Senator JAVITS. Professor Chomsky, of course, the obvious answer to you is, "what is your system?"

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, of course, I do not have an answer to that except to say that here is a case where the Congress could try to construct a different kind of forum in which the possibly criminal acts of the Executive can in fact be investigated with some authority, not with the authority to prosecute—Congress does not have the power—but to enlighten.

INFORMATION ISSUE

Let me, just to complete this, say that the matter of information which I think you mentioned, or Professor Schlesinger mentioned, is very important now. There are secret studies which do not by any stretch of the imagination have anything to do with the national defense, which probably would shed a great deal of light on the possible criminal acts of the Executive and the nature of the war. For example, there is a Rand Motivation and Morale Study, sections of which actually were introduced by Secretary McNamara into congressional testimony back in 1966, which were very revealing. They imply, I believe, a conscious effort to force population removal, for example. This study is alleged to be very large, very extensive. It deals with the attitudes of Vietnamese peasants and defectors back in the late sixties. How can that have anything to do with national defense? It could have a lot to do with determining what went on in that war and why, and I think probably if one looked beyond you could find many cases of this sort, and somehow Congress ought to try to find a way to make that kind of information public.

Senator JAVITS. Professor Chomsky, we are trying to deal with the information issue, if you have been watching the Senate's proceedings. Our own committee has been a real leader. My time is up but I just wanted to ask you to complete any other suggestion you have for us, any other thing that you think, any other alternative we could have other than those already outlined.

Mr. Schlesinger. I do not think there is any gimmick.

Senator Javits. No, anything.

AWAKENING PEOPLE TO WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON

Mr. Schlesinger. I think democracy is essentially a process of political education and in the end you can do things only that the majority of the people are persuaded ought to be done. The committee has done an extraordinary job in these hearings in awakening the people to what has been going on in Vietnam. I believe they ought to do everything they can in the way of scattering around the country making speeches about the situation. In the end the people have to decide.

Senator Javits. Professor Chomsky, do you wish to add anything?

Mr. Chomsky. I also do not know a gimmick. I think the Senators have to go to the people. They have to try to set up forums. I think a senatorial filibuster might be a reasonable act, again as a symbolic act. I think one has to find methods of expressing a firm commitment and serving as a rallying point for the popular movement of opposition to the war which is unfocused, leaderless largely, and which should have many centers of leadership, many places with which it can associate. I think somehow that is the job of political leadership. Now, I just do not know specifically what this means.

Senator Javits. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC MIND

The Chairman. Just a comment or two. Professor Schlesinger, you reminded me of this question of access to the public mind. The use of television as it is used now by the Presidential office is an obstacle that is almost impossible for Congress to overcome. I introduced a bill on this; it got nowhere. But how can all of us, if we do anything here in our regular duties, compete with this kind of access to the minds of the American people when the President can go on, as he did the other night, and I suppose practically everyone who has a television set sees him because it occupies the whole spectrum. It is a technological development which seems to me to contribute to the undermining of the congressional power or influence or educating the mind. There is hardly any way that you can compete that I know of. Individual Senators can never command that kind of attention.

Mr. Chomsky. Can Congress pass appropriations to permit Congressmen to buy time?

The Chairman. As I say, I tried to introduce a bill but the process has gone so far that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reverse it. There has been nothing but a negative response to that effort, which was to provide some form of equal time.

I have one or two things I want to put into the record, Mr. Reporter, and because I think it is relevant to the questions asked by the Senator from Illinois, I want to include a quote from the memoirs of Charles de Gaulle which bears exactly on this question that you were discussing. We are all familiar with it, but it ought to be in the record—De Gaulle's advice to John Kennedy about Vietnam. It is a very striking thing, as he always expresses it in very——

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I might add that I have read the American minutes of that meeting. I do not recall General de Gaulle being quite as explicit about Vietnam as his own memory is; I think he improved his memory of the conversation.

The CHAIRMAN. Substantively or only as to style?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Substantively; it is much sharper there than I recall it, but I would hope the Senate Foreign Relations Committee might itself soon get access to the minutes of that meeting and check it.

The CHAIRMAN. I would hope so, too, but the prospects are not very good.

Anyway, this is a historical document and it is a quote from his memoirs.

(The information referred to follows:)

CHARLES DE GAULLE ON VIETNAM

(Extension of remarks of Hon. Andrew Jacobs, Jr., of Indiana, in the House of Representatives, *Monday, May 8, 1972*)

Mr. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, the following is a quotation from Charles de Gaulle as it appeared in his "Memoirs of Hope."

"In South Vietnam, after having encouraged the seizure of dictatorial power by Ngo Dinh Diem and hastened the departure of the French advisers, they were beginning to install the first elements of an expeditionary corps under cover of economic aid. John Kennedy gave me to understand that the American aim was to establish a bulwark against the Soviets in the Indochinese peninsula. But instead of giving him the approval he wanted, I told the president that he was taking the wrong road.

" 'You will find,' I said to him, 'that intervention in this area will be an endless entanglement. Once a nation has been aroused, no foreign power, however strong, can impose its will upon it. You will discover this for yourselves. For even if you find local leaders who in their own interests are prepared to obey you, the people will not agree to it, and indeed do not want you. The ideology which you invoke will make no difference. Indeed, in the eyes of the masses it will become identified with your will to power. That is why the more you become involved out here against communism, the more the communists will appear as the champions of national independence, and the more support they will receive, if only from despair. We French have had experience of it. You Americans wanted to take our place in Indochina. Now you want to take over where we left off and revive a war that we brought to an end. I predict that you will sink step by step into a bottomless military and political quagmire, however much you spend in men and money. What you, we and others ought to do for unhappy Asia is not to take over the running of these states ourselves, but to provide them with the means to escape from the misery and humiliation that, there as elsewhere, are the causes of totalitarian regimes. I tell you this in the name of the West.' "

WHY HO CHI MINH'S LETTERS WERE NOT ACKNOWLEDGED

The CHAIRMAN. One or two little odds and ends I wanted to ask you before I yield again.

There is one great puzzle to me, and you both have studied this matter and particularly the Pentagon Papers—it has always been a great mystery to me as to why the eight letters Ho Chi Minh wrote got no response whatever; no acknowledgement was made. I had not heard about the letters until the Pentagon Papers. Are you familiar with that incident and do you have any explanation of why at that early date Secretary Acheson, I assume, was completely indifferent to Ho's pleas of assistance? You recall he would like to be treated as we did the Philippines. Can either of you throw any light at all on the mood of that time as to why we were so indifferent to them?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. My guess is the letters were sent over to the French desk on the ground that this was an internal problem of France; and the people on the French desk thought if we replied to them it would be intervention in internal French affairs. My experience with bureaucracy would be to think that is the way it went.

Mr. CHOMSKY. I would suggest a different reason. After all, there was a period when Ho Chi Minh was recognized even by France as running the government of Vietnam and there was certainly reason to answer his letters; but as Dean Acheson said Ho Chi Minh was a Communist and everything else is irrelevant.

The CHAIRMAN. He gave that as a later——

Mr. CHOMSKY. In 1949, but it was the same policy then. It didn't make any difference whether some political leadership was democratic, popular, nationalist, independent, whether it was friendly to the United States, anything, as long as it was going to construct what we call a Communist regime, as long as there were alternatives which might, exactly as the Pentagon Papers report, not out of context but consistently, year by year, open up these areas to the western industrial societies and Japan and help us to preserve Japan in the western orbit and help us to preserve the position of France, within the U.S.-controlled global system. We were trying at that point to make sure that so-called Communist forces in Western Europe didn't gain too much ascendancy; as long as that was the case we were not going to jeopardize the expansion of western power.

The CHAIRMAN. Would this same answer apply to the report of the Dixie Mission which includes, of course, the John S. Service report of overtures from the Chinese Communists in 1944 which has now been widely circulated? All of this came to the attention of the chairman of this committee only recently—do you think the Administration was aware of this but took the decision on the grounds you just said?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, all we can say since the internal records are not available in other cases is that the decisions were taken with amazing consistency. They were taken in Greece, Korea, China, and Central America, in Vietnam, always with the same criterion applying. In the case of the Pentagon Papers, we know it was pretty much conscious; there is enough evidence to support that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. There is no evidence to suggest that the interests of expanding American capitalism accounted for the decisions in Europe. There were other grounds to oppose Stalinism.

Mr. CHOMSKY. We were not opposing Stalinism in Greece.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. There were grounds by western democrats.

JOHN S. SERVICE REPORT

The CHAIRMAN. I am curious about that. The Service report of 1944 was, as you know, rather well publicized in the Government, in that he sent it when the Ambassador, Patrick Hurley, was back here. He infuriated Hurley, but I would assume that also sort of insures its having been brought to the attention of the Administration.

Is your analysis of why they did not respond there, as I recall it, John Service reported that Mao made very broad offers of investment and so on and assistance, industrial help and so forth, and this, too, was unavailable.

Mr. CHOMSKY. But not like those of Chiang Kai-shek. There was very good reason to oppose Stalinism; in fact, I opposed it then and now. But we were not opposing Stalinism in Greece; or in China. On the contrary, Stalin was opposed to the Greek guerrillas and to Mao; nor did we oppose Stalinism in Latin America or elsewhere. Yet in all of these cases the U.S. tried to destroy, and in most cases succeeded in destroying, popular movements which threatened to extricate their societies from the international global systems.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chomsky has evidently forgotten that as late as 1947 the policy of the American Government was to establish a coalition government in China between the Communists and the Nationalists and that the most eminent living American of that period, General Marshall, was sent out to carry through that policy. This notion that because of the interests of American capitalism we were embarked on an effort to destroy Chinese Communism simply does not accord with well known historical fact.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, I am afraid that is not true. We began in 1945 to ferry——

Mr. SCHLESINGER. You mean it was not true about General Marshall?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Yes.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. How is it consistent with your previous statement?

Mr. CHOMSKY. It is very consistent with the general thesis that we will always support that group in a society, that political possibility in a society which, of course, has some chance of success and will make more easy our entry into the society. So, in 1945, we ferried Chiang's troops all over the place and American Marines and others were involved in supporting him. When it became obvious he was not going to obtain the kind of victory we hoped for, we tried to support the kind of coalition that offered us maximal entry into China; and when that failed we just supported Chiang-Kai-shek openly despite the popular support for Maoist China, which was not part of the Stalinist bloc at that time.

The CHAIRMAN. I don't know; this is my own personal curiosity and I am not sure that it promotes the regular purpose of the committee, but it has been a tremendous puzzle to me, really, how this has worked. There is a certain consistency in your theory, but I am inclined to think it isn't quite that simple; there are these other highly emotional matters. I think when you consider the emotion that attended the hearings during the McCarthy period, and I don't want to rehash that, but this is a phenomenon that I must say puzzles me tremendously. I don't understand it at all when I read this. I am sure it seems peculiar to you that the Foreign Relations Committee and its chairman were so ignorant of all of these papers and what took place here. I have often wondered what would have happened had we had Mr. Service as a witness, as you are this morning, say, in

1946 or 1947. Of course, no such thing took place and that knowledge was kept closely within the Department of State so far as I know. I was not on the committee during that period. I certainly was unaware of the report at that time.

CONCEPT OF NEUTRALISM FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA

Let me end by this question:

There was in one of your statements a reference to neutralism. The committee had a study made by some historians—some years ago on the relevance of the concept of neutralism for Southeast Asia, particularly for Indochina.

Would neutralism, be one aspect which has a settlement? You said, "The President in March 1964, had warned Ambassador Lodge 'to knock . . . down the idea of neutralization wherever it rears its ugly head' "—that is a quote from, I gather, a Presidential cable. "Neutralism, as Ambassador Taylor noted, 'appeared to mean throwing the internal political situation open and thus inviting Communist participation,' for obvious reasons an intolerable prospect."

Of course, neutralism has been used often in other cases, particularly cases where great powers have come together in other insoluble situations and this seems to me might be mutually acceptable to the Chinese and Americans and others.

Could either of you comment on why is it so objectionable or whether you think it is an idea that could be usefully applied to the situation in Vietnam?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I have always believed that neutralization was the best solution for that area. I thought President Kennedy pursued the correct policy in trying to bring about neutralization of Laos. I wish that that policy had been extended to Vietnam.

Mr. CHOMSKY. Let me just say I don't agree with your interpretation of what happened in the Kennedy period. Kennedy was driven to the acceptance of an earlier Russian proposal for the neutralization of Laos because of the collapse of the efforts to support the extreme rightwing forces there.

The reason why neutralism was not accepted in South Vietnam was expressed very clearly, for example, by intelligence, by Ambassador Taylor, by many others whom I have quoted. Namely: neutralism would mean that a solution would arise on the basis of political strength which would mean, it was assumed, that the Communists would win.

In a broader context it is often forgotten, in fact, it has almost been kept from the public record, that in 1962 the National Liberation Front proposed neutralization of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as its official program.

The CHAIRMAN. When was this?

Mr. CHOMSKY. 1962; that is the official program of the National Liberation Front. We may perhaps question whether they meant it but anyway it is their official program.

You will search very hard to find a record of that in discussions of 1962 of these events. Yet, it was known and it was discussed, for example, by the French experts, and, in fact, most of the people who were close to the Vietnamese, much closer than American intelligence or even American reporters, people like Benard Fall, people like Jean Claude Pomonti who has lived there for 20 years; people like George Chaffard and Jean Lacouture—all of them have pointed out to the United States the separatism of the NLF and, in fact, it was expressed in the 1962 program; and, for what it is worth, I might mention that Pham Van Dong repeated those words exactly to me in 1970 when I was in Hanoi.

One may say that they don't mean it or something like that, but that kind of proposal has always been offered; it has been kept secret in the United States or it has been rejected for the reasons I have discussed already at length.

The CHAIRMAN. This attitude has some bearing on neutralism, but our very friendly and extensive assistance to Communist countries like Yugoslavia, President Tito—how we can accept that and have such an intolerably hard line in Vietnam is a psychological puzzle that has always been difficult for me to deal with, and as I have already mentioned, there is Cuba.

Mr. CHOMSKY. I think Acheson answered that. He said that Titoism was a likely outcome in Indochina and Acheson pointed out in one place—I am sorry I don't have the reference in mind—that we might accept this as an absolutely last resort—if everything else failed we might accept a Titoist regime—and the reasons, I believe, are the ones I have already expressed.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate very much what you gentlemen have contributed to these hearings. Your papers are extraordinarily well done, thoughtful, and I think the discussion has been very good.

I yield to the Senator from Illinois. I am going to have to leave in a moment. I have a luncheon with the minority leader and I can't ignore that.

There will be inserted in the record at this point, from the Congressional Record of July 27, 1970, an excerpt of an interview of President Nixon by Mr. John Chancellor.

(The information referred to follows:)

TV INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT NIXON OF JULY 1, 1970

(Reprinted in Congressional Record, July 27, 1970)

Mr. CHANCELLOR. . .

Do you feel that in the modern world there are situations when the President must respond against the very tight deadline or for reasons of security in using American troops crossing a border with them when he cannot, under reasons you yourself have described, consult with the Legislative Branch?

The Constitution says they declare war and you, sir, run it.

THE PRESIDENT. Another good example of course is the Cuban missile crisis. President Kennedy had a very difficult decision there and 2 hours and a quarter before he ordered—and I thought with great justification and great courage—before he ordered the blockade, the use of American men to blockade Cuba, he told the Senate and the Congressional leaders. Now why didn't he give them more time? For a very good reason he did not give them more time.

It was imperative to move soon with some surprise and some impact or the possibility of a nuclear confrontation might have been greater. That is one example. I trust we don't have another situation like Cambodia, but I do know that in the modern world, there are times when the Commander-in-Chief, the President of the United States, will have to act quickly. I can assure the American people that this President is going to bend over backwards to consult the Senate and consult the House whenever he feels it can be done without jeopardizing the lives of American men.

But when it is a question of the lives of American men or the attitudes of people in the Senate, I am coming down hard on the side of defending the lives of American men.

DECISIONMAKING PROCESS IN 1961

Senator PERCY. I would like to go back to 1961 to better try to understand what happened and what the decisionmaking processes were.

The authors of the Pentagon Papers concluded on the basis of General Taylor's report of October 1961, that it was the Americans who proposed the idea to the South Vietnamese for involving American troops in combat.

Was this questioned or opposed by anyone in the Government at the time?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. The question of sending American troops to Vietnam?

Senator PERCY. Right, and it was really the Americans who were pressing this idea for sending troops?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Yes; I read that in the Pentagon Papers. As I said, I was not involved in Southeast Asian affairs and did not remember it at that time. I have recorded Kennedy's remarks to me after the Taylor-Rostow report in which he said, "If they were to send in American troops, they will come in and there will be great applause and after 3 days will have been forgotten. It is like taking a drink and after a while you have to take another." He took more drinks, unfortunately, but that was all I can record or have recorded about his reaction.

ESTIMATE OF LENGTH AND COST OF COMMITMENT

Senator PERCY. After the decision was made to send forces out there, was there any discussion that you recall whether this would be a long-term commitment, as to how long our commitment would be, what the ultimate cost would be?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. There was none.

Senator PERCY. How we saw the end of it?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Indeed the impression was this would be a very short commitment because of the preponderance of forces on the side of the Saigon Government was so great. As I say, our intelligence estimate was the total number of Viet Cong at the end of 1961 was about 15,000 and it was thought this was manageable.

The Pentagon Papers do tell at considerable length about the McNamara plan for the phasing out of American forces, a plan which was developed, as I recall, at the end of 1962 and which implied total withdrawal of American forces sometime in 1964, 1965. I think that was the estimate. It was based on ignorant and mistaken analysis, but it showed that our original intensions were limited.

U.S. INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

Senator PERCY. We grossly miscalculated the resilience and strength of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese support a decade ago, and this apparently has happened again in the last few days—the South Vietnam ambassador told me he didn't know where all these tanks came from. After all these years and the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on intelligence and concentrating our whole attention in that small area of the world, not directly related to our own national interest, why is it we still don't have adequate intelligence about it?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. In justice to the CIA, I think that the national intelligence estimates of the CIA, particularly in the fifties, and the estimates from the intelligence bureau of the State Department in the early sixties were not bad. I understand that the CIA, for example, according to the newspapers, only recently argued that the mining of Haiphong was not going to have miraculous effect.

On the other hand, every President is surrounded by a welter of conflicting advice and can select the advice that his temperament and intelligence and judgment require, however, there is an inherently distorting process in the structure of government which brings to Presidents the intelligence their subordinates want them to hear. There is an extraordinary capacity to reenact past folly. There is the general comfort of the bureaucracy when it is doing the same old thing rather than doing new things.

It would seem to me in any number of cases our operational intelligence failure was so great that it should have called for a vast upheaval. When you think of how many generals Lincoln went through before he found one to win the Civil War, and when you think of the way we have kept on generals of tested military imbecility in command, and then promoted them, Lincoln wouldn't have kept those generals two minutes. But Presidents Johnson and Nixon seem to be imprisoned by the generals they appoint.

REACTION OF CHINESE AND SOVIETS

Senator PERCY. I assume at the National Security Council's meeting of 3 hours the other day a great deal of deliberation was given to the thought of the reaction of the Chinese and the Soviets to our counteractions and reactions now.

How much discussion was given at the time we sent U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam? How much discussion was given to the impact on China and the Soviet Union and their relationship to us?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. When we sent U.S. combat units, which was in the spring of 1965, I was not in the Government. Our military advisers were sent to be attached to units of the ARVN. I heard of no such discussion, but I attended National Security Council meetings only when they were in something I was working on: so I never attended Vietnam meetings—I imagine there was some discussion but others would know better than I.

BACKUP SUPPORT PROVIDED NORTH VIETNAM

Senator PERCY. The report of the Taylor-Rostow mission concentrated on the possibilities of the infiltration of supplies from North Vietnam, the various routes and so forth. However, was thought given to the backup support that would be provided by Eastern Europe, by the Soviet Union, by China and the various routes that they could use—sea, rail, air—to bring supplies in? Was there a full understanding of the backup support that would be provided if we provided support to South Vietnam?

The CHAIRMAN. Will the Senator yield? I just want to say thank you very much, and you continue.

Senator PERCY. I find that at about this hour it is a good time for the Republicans to seize control here, reading into the record past Republican platforms and so on.

The CHAIRMAN. That is quite all right; it will be to our advantage to do that.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I know of no discussion, but again someone like McGeorge Bundy or Michael Forrestal were far more intimately involved in this and would know. It must be remembered the apportionment of things was very difficult. As I said, the 15,000 Viet Cong was the estimate; there were, of course, no regular North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam until the summer of 1965, and the problem of infiltration of arms and men was a very limited, minor problem. The Taylor-Rostow report did argue the case for northern strategy. I think they were absolutely wrong in their assumptions that this was not primarily an indigenous uprising which had been adopted for its own purposes by the North Vietnamese.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S DECISION TO SEND COMBAT TROOPS

Senator PERCY (presiding). President Kennedy and General Taylor were personally very close. They had a high regard for each other, and yet when General Taylor came back from his mission and recommended that U.S. combat forces be sent, this decision was not accepted as a recommendation by President Kennedy. When did President Kennedy actually decide to send combat troops and what happened to cause him to change his mind?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. I think we have to distinguish a couple of things here: First, let me say personal friendship is not necessarily a sign of policy agreement. In the middle of the late sixties, Robert Kennedy and Maxwell Taylor used to play tennis a lot but they could not disagree more about what ought to be done in Vietnam.

Senator PERCY. But he did send him on a mission out there, not on tennis or ping pong, but to assess the military situation?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Yes. Kennedy sent General Taylor because General Taylor had been among those who had opposed in 1954 the effort of Vice President Nixon and others to get American troops committed to Vietnam.

You said why did Kennedy not accept the recommendation to send combat troops?

Senator PERCY. I am more interested in why he changed his mind and what happened to cause him to change his mind.

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Taylor recommended two things: He recommended sending military advisers which would be attached to the Vietnamese Army and Government and he recommended sending a combat force. We did not send combat units until 1965. Kennedy did accept the recommendation of sending advisers, so that his resistance was—and continued—to the notion of sending American combat units.

CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS

Senator PERCY. Do you recall any attempt in those days to consult with Members of Congress on the decision to send combat troops or on the United States defense treaty with Vietnam?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Well, Chuck, again I am a defective witness because I was not involved in these things. I was involved in Latin American affairs and Western European affairs and could talk with much more knowledge. I overheard, so to speak, when people would talk to me occasionally about things that were going on; but the answer to that question is I simply don't know.

CLAIM THAT VIETNAM IS TEST OF U.S. CREDIBILITY

Senator PERCY. Is there any foundation to the oft repeated claim that Vietnam was and continues to be a real test of United States credibility of U.S. determination to stick by our commitments?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. If that was a test, we have failed that test abominably because all we have done by all these years in Vietnam is to show our incapacity to deal with a guerrilla movement. I think our persistence in error has done far more to destroy American credibility than withdrawal would have done. I might add this whole notion of this kind of promiscuous test of credibility is wrong. The proposition that if we pull out of Vietnam, other countries will expect us to pull out from parts of the world where our direct and vital interests are concerned is not very convincing. The idea that, because we won't carry out an absurd policy in Vietnam, our adversaries will conclude that we wouldn't defend Western Europe, for example, makes no sense. By that argument, after the Soviet Union pulled its missiles out of Cuba, we could have done anything we wanted to in Eastern Europe. But it is ridiculous because you have to draw a distinction between zones of vital interest and zones that don't promote interest.

No one is going to deduce from our failure to fight to the end in a hopeless and terrible war in a zone of no vital interest to the United States, that we will therefore not persist in an area which we consider vital to us, any more than we would have supposed, as I say, that, because the Russians pulled out of Cuba, they had lost all interest in Eastern Europe. This is the fallacy in President Nixon's argument.

Senator PERCY. Did any allies at any time specifically raise with us the issue as to the necessity of our supporting Vietnam to maintain our credibility with all other allies?

Mr. SCHLESINGER. Not to my knowledge, but that would have become an issue after I left the Government. You know the number of troops we had in Vietnam at the end of 1963 was about 16,800, considerably less than the number of American troops in Korea, West Germany or a number of other places. President Johnson did not mention Vietnam in his first state of the Union address; in his second state of the Union address in January 1965 he gave it 100 words.

I think there is a danger in reading back into earlier periods the magnitudes of the period after we Americanized the war. I say this not in defense of the Kennedy administration, because, as I have said a number of times, I think the Kennedy administration policy in Vietnam was mistaken.

Senator PERCY. Professor Chomsky, just a few final questions for you.

DETERMINING COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THIRD WORLD

To what extent was the American insistence on having its own way in determining a course of development in the Third World the reason behind the Vietnam episode?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I would say to an overwhelming extent in Vietnam and in all the other cases I have mentioned, of course, adding to that the fact that it was not primarily the Third World that concerned us there, but the industrial center of Japan and the American efforts to insure French support for our plans for Western Europe. But, of course, it was always argued, and with some justice, that a keystone to that plan was the maintenance of Southeast Asia within the American orbit and that if Indochina was lost to the popular movement there this very well might lead to further "ideological successes," to further imitation elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

DID U.S. HAVE VITAL INTEREST IN VIETNAM?

Senator PERCY. In your judgment, did the United States have any real interest, any kind of a vital interest, in Vietnam which caused us to make a commitment or is the fact of our commitment what created the U.S. interest in Vietnam—in other words, which came first, the interest or the commitment?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Well, I have to hedge a little bit on that because I think there were real interests that did lead the United States into Vietnam in the early period.

For example, the interests described so eloquently in the National Security Council 48/1 that I read parts of, which describe the economic and strategic interests of the United States in maintaining control of South Vietnam and Southeast Asia and Japan and so on. I think those interests were quite real and I think until about 1960 one can argue there is perhaps some real relationship between interests and means, although it is not the case after that. Nevertheless, I object to our implementation of those interests. I object to it on moral grounds and I would even object to it on legal grounds.

It was legally improper. In my testimony I mentioned National Security Council memoranda which virtually refute, are almost a parody of the laws the executive branch has sworn to uphold. When people talk about our commitments and so on, I think our major commitment is to a system of laws in which the U.N. Charter is a centerpiece, and that had we simply kept to that we would not have pursued whatever interests we had by forceful intervention in the internal affairs of someone else.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Senator PERCY. Lastly, in an area I want to do justice to, the sphere of influence which Walter Lippman feels to be so important—I did engage in discussions with him in a seminar in Latin America; in fact, there were brilliant participants. He had difficulty defending Vietnam.

Is it likely, in your judgment, in our present state of Chinese-

American relations that some sort of arrangement is going to be made eventually with China and that the United States might end up with granting to China the influence in an area that you might call its sphere of influence that we have really long sought as an item?

Mr. CHOMSKY. Again, I am not in the least convinced that had we left Vietnam to its own people, this would be a Chinese sphere of influence. On the contrary, I think it is very likely that there would have been a more or less Titoist development.

VIETNAMESE STRONGLY ANTI-CHINESE

The Vietnamese are strongly anti-Chinese. When you visit Hanoi, the first thing they do is to take you to the War Museum where they show you how they defeated the Chinese this and that time, and so on and so forth. This is not for show; that is very strongly ingrained; they are strongly independent.

If China had attempted to intervene in Vietnam they would be fighting what we are fighting. I don't believe——

Senator PERCY. It is conceivable that a Communist government, a strong one——

Mr. CHOMSKY. Would be quite independent.

Senator PERCY (continuing). Might have been a bigger buffer?

Mr. CHOMSKY. No doubt.

Senator PERCY. Stronger buffer against Peking?

Mr. CHOMSKY. I think there is every likelihood of that and, in fact, it appears in the Pentagon record as the assessment of a number of people. But since the resistance——

Senator PERCY. Our whole effort has been counterproductive according to that theory.

CHINESE AGGRESSIVENESS

Mr. CHOMSKY. It has indeed been counterproductive according to that theory. We said that we were attempting to contain China. I don't believe that for a moment and I might say that to contain China is a very simple matter because for many reasons China has been the least aggressive of the great powers. It is concerned with its internal problems. Perhaps someday in the distant future when China has come to terms with its enormous internal problems, it will be an aggressive state; but when U.S. intelligence, or the Pentagon papers, or historians try to establish that, they really come a cropper. For instance, in late 1964, the Pentagon Papers historian says, the aggressiveness of Communist China seemed very ominous to the United States. The one bit of evidence that he can find is that Sukarno withdrew Indonesia from the U.N., which led to various speculations. On those grounds Chinese aggressiveness seemed ominous to the United States and we had to move in to destroy Vietnam. We have to be very careful to distinguish between propaganda and facts.

THEORY TAUGHT AT WAR COLLEGE

Senator PERCY. Do either of you happen to know whether the monolithic theory of Communism and world domination is still being taught at the War College?

Mr. Schlesinger. I don't know. I haven't lectured at the War College for years.

Senator Percy. Do you know?

Mr. Chomsky. No.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

Senator Percy. I want to thank both of our witnesses today on behalf of the committee. We very deeply appreciate your being here, the careful preparation that went into your testimony and your great patience and forebearance here.

We will reconvene these hearings on the origin of the Vietnam War tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

Two witnesses will testify on the early possible war involvement in Indochina—Frank White, OSS officer, and Abbott Moffett, former State Department official.

Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, at 1:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, to reconvene at 10 a.m., Thursday, May 11, 1972.)

CAUSES, ORIGINS, AND LESSONS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1972

United States Senate,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 4221, New Senate Office Building, Senator J. W. Fulbright (chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Fulbright, Javits, and Percy.

The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

OPENING STATEMENT

Today we concentrate on a period generally overlooked in the public discussion of the Pentagon Papers or the origins of the war in Vietnam. The roots of American involvement go deeper than the Tonkin Gulf incident and deeper than the Kennedy or Eisenhower commitments to South Vietnam. Because these roots reach back to the Truman and Roosevelt Administrations, it is that period we wish to discuss today.

Franklin Roosevelt was the first American President to pay serious attention to events in French Indochina. The record of his administration clearly shows that he wanted Indochina to belong to neither Japan nor France. During the Second World War he pressed our allies and his own Administration to support his proposal for an "international trusteeship" for the French colony, then under Japanese occupation. The record also shows that neither his allies nor the members of his own Administration shared his enthusiasm for this proposal.

When the Truman Administration came into office, the State Department quickly reversed Roosevelt's policy and told France that we did not question her sovereignty over Indochina. We did this despite the fact that a nationalist leader named Ho Chi Minh had established a republic in August 1945, that had effected control over large areas of Vietnam above the 16th parallel. This republic ruled North Vietnam until the outbreak of war between France and the Viet Minh in December 1946. This period is relevant to American policy because it was at this time that we formed our opinion about Ho Chi Minh and judged him to be an agent of "international Communism" rather than a nationalist leader. We formed this judgment even though Ho had made a determined effort to win American support both during and after the war. He said that he admired the United States for its anticolonialist policy and he sought our diplomatic support and economic aid. For reasons that I hope we can discover today, we ignored these overtures and supported the French in their efforts to regain control of their colony.

BACKGROUND OF WITNESSES

We are very fortunate today to have as witnesses two men who were either involved in the decision-making process at the time these events occurred or who observed the unfolding of both our policy and the situation in Indochina.

Mr. Frank M. White is a former major in the Office of Strategic Services or OSS which was the predecessor, in a sense, of our early CIA, and a former reporter for Time magazine. As an officer in the Secret Intelligence Section of OSS, Major White spent several months in Hanoi in 1945 and 1946. There it was his job to report on the general situation and to become acquainted with the leaders of the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam. As a reporter for Time he has covered not only the more recent war in Vietnam but also other postcolonial wars around the world. He thus offers us not only valuable information about early postwar Indochina but also a unique perspective on the course of events in that troubled part of the world.

Mr. Abbot Low Moffat has likewise led two distinguished careers. For 14 years he was a member of the New York State Assembly and for 17 years after that he served in the Department of State. He offers the committee valuable insight into the period we are studying because he was Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs in the State Department from 1943 to 1947, the years when the foundation of our cold war foreign policy was laid. Throughout this time the formulation of our policy toward French Indochina came partly under his supervision.

Mr. Moffat also has the distinction of being the last American diplomat to talk with Ho Chi Minh.

I think it is extremely timely and fortunate that we have two such qualified witnesses on the origin of what I think is the greatest tragedy in the history of this country, with the exception of our own Civil War. While we have heard many distinguished scholars and observers, I don't know of anyone who could bring to the committee and to the attention of the public a more realistic and convincing account of the early days of the creation of Vietnam and its independence—and more significantly for us, the early days of our own involvement. The tragedy of this involvement and the tragedy of the mistakes of a great people, of the United States of America, comes through from the testimony of such men better than in any testimony that I have heard about.

Mr. White, you have not prepared a formal statement but if you would, in effect, sort of reminisce for the benefit of the committee from your personal experiences and observations of Mr. Ho Chi Minh and the circumstances that surrounded the birth of the present policy that finds us in virtually a confrontation with the two other greatest powers in the world.

As you know, this morning I just heard on the radio as I came down here an account of a very tough response by the government of Russia to the latest initiative of our own government. It couldn't be more timely than we now study how it is that we started and how this whole matter began.

I wonder if you could do that? Say a little about your personal relations there, more than I did, and then tell us what you know about the beginning of this extraordinary policy that the United States has been following.

STATEMENT OF FRANK M. WHITE, FORMER MAJOR, OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES; FORMER REPORTER, TIME MAGAZINE

Mr. White. Mr. Chairman, I certainly will——

The Chairman. Pull that microphone in. We have a very inefficient and weak system of public address here so you will have to pull it in rather close because the audience cannot hear you.

Mr. White. First of all, Mr. Chairman, it is a great pleasure to be here and I do hope that the kind of background that Mr. Moffat and I can give you will be of help to the committee.

MR. WHITE'S EXPERIENCES

I would like to state in the first place that this goes back quite a long time and one's memory does get somewhat rusty but I have followed the events in Indochina since that time fairly closely in a rather professional way.

I arrived at this point in time as an officer in OSS. I had been on operations in Southeast Asia.

The Chairman. What was this time period? When did you arrive?

Mr. White. I went to Southeast Asia in the first part of 1943 and 1944.

The Chairman. 1944?

Mr. White. Yes.

The Chairman. 1943?

Mr. White. The mission of OSS—there were a number of missions of OSS at that time in Southeast Asia, but I was mainly involved in those guerrilla operations behind Japanese lines.

The Chairman. In North Vietnam?

Mr. White. My particular operations did not take me to North Vietnam but some of our other operations did. OSS did send missions in and met Ho—this is part of the record—before the Japanese surrendered.

My own operations were mainly in Burma and Thailand; but just after the bomb exploded—we had moved forward to Rangoon which had been cleared of Japanese forces—and OSS wanted then to send what we called at the time "city teams" into all those capitals of Japanese occupied Southeast Asia because it was clear, apparently, to our superiors in Washington and elsewhere that there would be no other intelligence group sending any kind of reports to Washington or to the State Department or to the Department of Defense—the War Department at that time—because obviously there were as yet no State Department officers there; there were no consulates; nobody was there representing U.S. interests in that part of the world.

In any event we were all invited, or those of us were invited to volunteer if we wanted to and were selected out for various cities.

I volunteered and selected out for Saigon because primarily they wanted someone who had had professional reporting experience and before the war I had been a correspondent for the United Press; and, secondly, they wanted people who at least, according to their records, spoke French, and it appeared on my record, rather inaccurately, that I spoke French. And so I was with a team that went. We were prepared, actually, to paratroop into Saigon but, as a matter of fact, when we flew over the field we could see the Japanese below and they were perfectly prepared to permit a plane to land. So instead of jumping in, rather cavalier fashion, we landed in rather more orthodox fashion.

The CHAIRMAN. What was the date of that?

Mr. WHITE. This was the day after the bomb.

The CHAIRMAN. You are talking about the atomic bomb here or in Hiroshima?

Mr. WHITE. I am talking about the first one.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. And I can't really tell you the precise day of the month because I have forgotten.

The CHAIRMAN. It was in August of 1945?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, it was the second or third week in August sometime.

The CHAIRMAN. That's right, 1945.

Mr. WHITE. That's right.

The CHAIRMAN. And you landed in Saigon?

Mr. WHITE. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead.

WITNESS' MISSION AS LIAISON

Mr. WHITE. Then, to get more directly to the point where I believe the committee's interests lie, I stayed in Saigon on various missions I was—we were—divided up with functions among the several officers within this group. Among other things, I was to be liaison with both the French and the British when they arrived on the scene. The British were the occupying—were responsible for the occupation of all Southeast Asia below the 16th parallel. A British general was the normal commander of this operation; Lord Mountbatten was the chief commander; he delegated that part of the world to a British Lt. General Gracey, and the French were then soon to be represented by Admiral D'Argenlieu, and then, later, by Field Marshal LeClerc. So my nominal role was to do the liaison between my group and those two commands as they were fleshed out.

I should remind you that we got there very early in the game. The British came with an initial delegation, a half dozen officers; the French came and the British came on in force later.

Anyhow, at the end of October, the 1st of November, approximately, we had noticed at Saigon that a number of things were transpiring and there was a request that I be sent with a small group to Hanoi, which was a rather complicated affair then because there were a lot of jurisdictional problems between the two theaters of operations; so I had to go and clear my mission with General MacArthur's headquarters in the Philippines and then later en route to—it was the long way around to Hanoi, but I went by Manila and then subsequently to Shanghai.

In Shanghai I was provided with Air Force transportation for me and my group to Hanoi and we arrived in Hanoi around the—my recollection is—the middle of November.

ACCOUNT OF HANOI

Two things were then in the process of happening: Well, perhaps, at this juncture, Mr. Chairman, I had occasion to write a dispatch many years later for publication in Life magazine and this was sent actually from Indochina because I was there as a correspondent.

The Chairman. Why don't you read those. I think——

Mr. White. Would that be proper?

The Chairman. Certainly.

Mr. White. I will try.

The Chairman. This is an account after you arrived in Hanoi?

Mr. White. This was an account of those days in Hanoi that I was to write some 20 years later:

> In December, 1945, Hanoi was a strange and stricken town, restive, covered with a film of red dust raised, more often than not, by crowds of tense demonstrators moving in the streets. Most of the demonstrators carried streamers identifying them as "Viet Minh" but there was also a profusion of non-Communist groups, less numerous and less well-organized, marching in counterdemonstrations. Whatever their political identification, the processions invariably headed for a dark red building then called "Le Palais du Gouvernement" inside of which lived——

The Chairman. Please read that a little slower so we can get it. We don't have copies of it, so read it so I can hear it clearly.

Mr. White (reading):

> * * * processions invariably headed for a dark red building then called "Le Palais du Gouvernement" inside of which lived a frail, lonely man named Ho Chi Minh.

The Chairman. This was your first meeting?

Mr. White. This was my first meeting.

> Late in 1945 Ho had proclaimed the independence of the State of Vietnam "within the French Union." In discussions with French representatives in Hanoi, notably with Sainteny, who was Chief of the French mission, Ho was trying to iron out precisely what the term "independence within the French Union" really meant. The negotiations were not going well. For one thing, the French themselves disagreed on the whole question of independence. Saiteny and his group proposed to give Vietnam something akin to "commonwealth status" with substantial autonomy in many fields, including its own army.
>
> The arrival of the first French troops December 19th and the way they arrived further darkened the scene. Under the Yalta agreement, British troops from the Indian Army constituted the Allied Occupation Force in the south of Vietnam, below the 16th parallel. In Tonkin the Chinese had been given the occupation assignment. The Chinese, under Marshal Lu Han, who was also called the "other Chinese Gimo," had devoted themselves to looting the country systematically of everything of value they could find.

I was trying, sir, in this dispatch, to portray the way Hanoi looked at that time. The French had not been authorized as yet to return in any strength; Ho was running a precariously organized provisional government and the Chinese were the main occupation force at the time, and they were busy looting the country. It was curious to see they were carrying everything off from out of Hanoi on their backs like ants leaving an anthill. It was an extraordinary scene. This was the situation when I arrived at that time.

WITNESS' MISSION

I go on in this dispatch saying there had been an OSS detachment in Hanoi but it had been recalled.

> My mission was to replace the Hanoi group. In the absence of any other official Americans, my assignment was to report political developments in Tonkin to the War Department and to the State Department. With me were a radio operator and a cryptographer. With our radio and "one-time pad"—now, a one-time pad is a system of encoding and decoding we all used to use in the field—we set up operations in a couple of rooms on the top floor of the Metropole Hotel. I sent a message to Ho Chi Minh identifying myself and asked to be received.
>
> For the chronicle of what happened after our arrival in Hanoi, via a U.S. Air Force C–46 cargo plane from Canton—

I have to rely on memory of many years ago. The dispatches that I was to send from Hanoi were all sent through channels by our radio from the Hotel Metropole. They went to OSS, I suppose, someplace, then into the archives of that period. Unless, of course, they have been destroyed, they are probably still classified. At least we sent them all Top Secret, encoded, but, anyway I have no way to refer back to refresh my memory on the period.

But the overall scene does remain vivid.

> There were mobs in the streets. Chinese troops continued to file out of Hanoi carrying their loot in bullock carts, captured Japanese trucks and even on their backs.
>
> All the elements of a combustive explosion were there.

The French had been given authorization; presumably Washington concurred. I was not told but anyhow, the French were going to reoccupy, reinvest Tonkin in the month of December of that year; and they had assembled a flotilla of warships headed by the battle cruiser *Richelieu* and they also had a flotilla of LST's; they obviously had been American at one time but were provided by the British from American sources originally.

Anyhow, the point to me—the function of my mission at that juncture was to see how this explosive situation might develop.

Ho was there. The French coming back; there were the Chinese. Everybody was—many people were acting pretty independently of instructions from their main capital. We were all a long way from instructions from higher authorities.

Anyhow, picking up my dispatch:

> I sat in a waterfront cafe in Haiphong and watched the incoming heavy cruiser RICHELIEU, then the only capital ship in the French navy, lob shells into the foothills behind the port city. These, it turned out later, constituted a show of force rather than an attack but the shelling served to heighten tensions another notch.

CONVERSATION WITH HO CHI MINH

> At the epicenter of all this sat Ho Chi Minh who invited me to call on him shortly after the French landing at Haiphong.
>
> Ho received me late in the afternoon. Save for a doorman, he appeared to be alone in the big palace. I sat with him in the main "salon" in the front of the building, both of us side by side in straightbacked chairs, a small table between

us. We were undisturbed for the next two hours. There were no interruptions, no secretaries, no telephone calls, no messengers. This by itself was strange, given the conflict and tumult outside. At one juncture a male servant produced tea and left. Ho wore the traditional high-buttoned tunic, floppy pants of the same khaki material. His beard was then wispy and his manner curiously detached. I was unprepared for a person so slight.

I began the conversation, explaining that I had come to report on events then happening in Vietnam and to transmit whatever messages he might want passed to U.S. authorities in Washington. I can't remember the conversation in detail, of course, but the general burden of his remarks are still with me. The conversation began in French but he later switched to English. He begged my pardon, saying that he would like to use his English which he rarely had occasion to do. The fact was that his English was better than my French.

He had no specific messages he wanted to transmit, but he said he was glad that there was interest in the United States in what was transpiring in this far-away corner of the globe.

Ho wondered if Americans knew how strongly the Vietnamese people desired independence. He went back to the history of early Chinese invasions, then reviewed the French occupation and finally the past five years under the Japanese. In great detail he developed his theme, the burden of which was that no matter who the occupier, the Vietnamese people had always been determined to resist. At no juncture in this recital did he refer in any way to himself or even to the Communist Party, although he was to mention the latter later on.

The second part of the conversation had to do with the present situation and what it implied for the future of the country. For a man who had spent most of the last five years hidden in the jungles of northwest Tonkin with a price on his head, he passed over the Japanese invasion of recent history with little comment.

Ho talked at greater length about the Chinese who were still streaming out of the city. The hardship and destruction they had caused in their relatively brief stay brought him, it seemed to me, very close to tears, especially their brutal treatment of Vietnamese women.

But what Ho really wanted to talk about wasn't the past but his country's prospects for the future. He referred to the past mainly to underscore the resiliency and determination of the people. Having made his case for the will of the Vietnamese to be independent, he then began to discuss what they would need to realize a better future. It was mainly in this context that he mentioned France, the Soviet Union—and, later the United States, in that order.

As for France, Ho said that in many ways the French had been helpful to the country and that a special "sympathie" existed between the French and "our people." He continued by saying that he felt that many French recognized finally that times had changed and that the traditional colonial form of rule had to end. He believed that men like Sainteny and others understood this and were prepared to cede real independence to Vietnam over a period of years. However, he could not be sure. He could not be certain that the arrangements he was reaching with French representatives in Hanoi would be honored either in Saigon or in Paris. Only time would tell that. Nor, he continued, could he be sure that many of his own people would be willing to trust the French or abide the delays that might occur in the negotiations.

He asked me if I had seen the crowds in the streets. When I said that I had but was not sure what they meant, he replied, "For many of our people, patience has come to an end."

HO CHI MINH'S CONVERSATION

He then brought up the Soviet Union. It was only at this juncture that he mentioned anything about himself personally. He referred to his young days as an "idealist" and his resulting troubles with French police. He mentioned that a sister had been maltreated and imprisoned in the Penal Colony at Poulo Condor.

That is the one where the cages were to appear in more recent times—as a result of her activity and his.

Eventually he had gone to the Soviet Union, he said, and studied the teaching of Marx and Lenin. He did not dwell on this much except to say that he believed that revolution had benefited the Russian people and that he had become a believer in Communism. But he went on to say that he did not believe that the

Soviet Union either could or would make any kind of a real contribution to building of what he called a new Vietnam.

And let me make an aside here, not from my notes, but I do also recall at that time that one of the peculiarities of Ho was his enormous curiosity. He wanted to be told about everything and this was not only a trait that I found myself in talking to him but I had a colleague in the British intelligence there at the time, well known, Colonel Trevor Wilson, who stayed on in Hanoi for many, many years both under cover and above ground; and he, also—I have seen him since in the last several years and he had that same recollection that Ho was always deeply curious as to what was going on. Ho knew, for example, that there had been large destruction by the German invasion of Russia. He knew that there had been some reconstruction but he had no idea—he asked me what went on in Stalingrad. Of course, I had not seen Stalingrad either but I had seen more recent newspapers and I had read them and I could give him more of an account than he had, since he had been so isolated. You have no idea what living five years in a jungle in a remote northwestern corner is.

HO CHI MINH'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH GANDHI AND NEHRU

He was most destitute of knowledge, and during this period, I learned from his conversations but also from my British colleague friend, that he engaged in long correspondence with Gandhi and Nehru; people he would just write out of the blue and ask them for their views of what was going on and they responded to him. So there was a voluminous amount of what must be fascinating correspondence, someplace, of all this correspondence, (Ho) trying to recover from his ignorance of what was going on in the world.

VIETNAM'S NEED FOR INVESTMENTS OF MONEY AND MACHINES

It was in this context that he asked me if I had seen any of the Vietnamese countryside. I confessed I had seen but little of the south and none of the north. Then he went into a lengthy description of the economy of the country, particularly stressing its dependence on rice. What we really need, he said, is large investments of money and machines, at first to repair and improve our dike system and then later, when we are self-sufficient in food, the means to make us a modern country in the industrial sense. Then he asked me if I thought the Russians at present could make such a contribution. I said I was not in any position to know.

Then he answered his own question by describing his understanding of the destruction that the war had caused in the Soviet Union, and concluded that the Russians would have their hands full for the next decade in rebuilding their own country.

The United States, Ho said, was probably in the best position to aid Vietnam in the postwar years. He said that we had emerged from the war with enormous power and prestige in the world. He also mentioned that America was a Pacific power and therefore would logically have a particular interest in the area. He also dwelled at some length on the disposition of Americans as a people to be sympathetic to self-determination of nations and generous in making contributions to less fortunate states. But here again he doubted that the United States Government could be counted on to come to the aid of Vietnam—in a massive way.

He said he felt that the U.S. Government would find more urgent things to do. He said something to the effect that, after all, Vietnam is a small country and far away. Vietnam could not be expected to loom large in the preoccupations of the United States.

[Laughter.]

Mr. White [Reading]:

In short, he was saying that he hoped America would interest itself in Vietnam but he didn't believe, in the final analysis, we would.

It was quite dark when I left the palace. He had given me no specific messages or requests to transmit. I returned to the Metropole. We had made no firm plans to meet again.

RECEPTION GIVEN BY HO IN PALACE

Thus it came as a surprise to receive a message from Ho just a few moments after returning to the hotel. The message said that he regretted the short notice, but would I care to come to a reception he was giving that same evening at the Palace? The invitation sounded quite casual and extemporaneous, but I changed uniforms and was back at the palace by 7:00 p.m. It turned out to be an extraordinary evening.

There were three other guests with Ho when I was ushered into the same salon we'd met in that afternoon before.

All three were Vietnamese. Two were elderly men in mandarin robes and headpieces. The third was much younger. He wore white shorts and an open neck white shirt. The latter was introduced to me as "The Provisional Minister of National Defense." He was Nguyen Van Giap—the general. At that time the name held little significance, nor could I engage him in much conversation either in French or English. The two elders turned out to be provisional ministers also—of education and cultural affairs, or some such. At the time I felt that I was simply being given an opportunity to meet some of Ho's official family informally. Rosé wine was served.

Then suddenly other guests began arriving. Through the double doors of the big room burst General LeClerc gripping his white malacon cane, followed by Generals Valluy and Salan, Sainteny and finally Colonel Mirmanbeau, LeClerc's Chief of Staff. This was the first team—

As I explained earlier, as I was a liaison officer, I knew all of them well—

Although my association with LeClerc had always been cordial, the French never concealed their irritation and distrust of OSS.

LeClerc was visibly distressed to see me there. He had no idea that Americans were there, and it is not mentioned in this particular dispatch because it wasn't pertinent but General LeClerc had been very unhappy with the activities of the French OSS unit in the south of the border as well as those in the north.

The Chairman. You mean the Americans?

Mr. White. Yes, sir; I am sorry.

The Chairman. The American OSS?

Mr. White. Yes, our activities.

The Chairman. Yes.

Mr. White. And indeed the first detachment commander in the south was a young American colonel called Peter Dewey, and the French had succeeded, in ways that were never explained to us, in effecting Colonel Dewey's recall, and indeed it was ironic and rather tragic that Colonel Dewey was assassinated in Saigon the night before he was to have been recalled; and it was rather unclear to all of us there at the time who did the assassination. I personally saw the assassination happen because it happened very close to where we were staying and I could actually see the people shooting the guns at him, so it could be determined whether it was a native Annamite, non-Caucasian, if you will, but who ordered the assassination was never clear; but it was clear that the French were very pleased to have Dewey recalled.

Next in order of arrival came the Field Commander of Lu Han's Chinese army and his Chief of Staff. The greetings exchanged on all sides were glacial and, finally, representing the British Commander in Indochina, came Lt. Colonel Trevor Wilson, the Chief of M1–5 in Hanoi, the one whom I referred to earlier.

ANECDOTE REGARDING DINNER

We did not make a cozy group. When dinner was announced, I wasn't prepared for that either. At first I wasn't sure that I was invited for dinner. Ho's note to me had only mentioned a "reception." Befitting my relatively modest rank of Major, obviously among four-star generals and above, I held back until all the others had found their places at the dinner table and were seated. If there hadn't been an empty chair I was prepared to slink away but there was an empty chair and it was next to Ho's place, and I could see that there was an invitation and the invitation carried my name.

The dinner was a horror. The French confined themselves to the barest minimum of conversation and scarcely spoke to the Chinese. For their part, the Chinese got drunk,—really wildly drunk, and at one point Ho spoke to me very quietly and I turned to him and I said, "I think, Monsieur Le President there is some resentment over the seating arrangement." I meant my place, of course, next to him as the seat of honor. "I can see that," said Ho, "but who else would I have to talk to?" he replied.

I think it was a rather telling anecdote. I hope so, because he did at that point in time, give the whole impression of a man very much isolated, very much defensive and very much on the reserve.

I saw Ho Chi Minh several other times in the course of the weeks I stayed on in Hanoi but none of these encounters were terribly memorable.

HO'S LEAVING FOR PARIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRENCH GOVERNMENT

There were plenty of developments to report to Washington including Ho's decision to go to Paris to finish his negotiations with the French government.

And then, of course, in March—that was the conclusion of this dispatch that I was to write for Life—Ho did go and I will leave to others who reported to this committee earlier on what transpired in Paris.

My own tour was finished there. Ho left. When I last saw him before he left for Paris and his discussions, he was hopeful but not particularly confident that they were going to work out. He felt, as he originally suggested to me, that extremists on both sides, his own as well as French public opinion, would make it very difficult for him to come to a meaningful agreement in achieving a real measure of independence for his country.

Obviously, he was more than prophetic in some of the things he said.

Then I returned to Saigon and stayed on in the theater somewhat longer on other missions, and then came home.

WITNESS IN VIETNAM BEFORE, DURING TET OFFENSIVE

It is maybe pertinent to the testimony that I can provide for the committee that after this period I had one other occasion to spend a substantial amount of time in Vietnam, and that was during the Tet offensive or just before the Tet offensive in 1967 and 1968. I was a correspondent at that juncture for Time and Life magazines; and then from the period mainly from 1948 to 1950 I was on the Paris staff of Time magazine and Life magazine, and then in 1954 at the time of the Peace Conference in Geneva I returned to Paris and was, from then until the middle or the first part of the 1960's, I was Paris Bureau Chief of the two magazines and, of course, one of the principal stories we had at that time was the French aspect of the Vietnam story: and also I had occasion to watch the dissolution of the French colonial empire elsewhere, most notably in North Africa, and I did cover the French departure from such countries as Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria and a good deal of the French black empire or black Africa.

PARALLELS BETWEEN WITHDRAWAL EFFORTS

If the chairman will forgive me, I can't help but be struck by some parallels between the U.S. efforts to withdraw from Vietnam and the problems of the French withdrawal from North Africa. So many of the arguments it seemed pertained; I have that sort of *deja vu* feeling that I have been through some of this before because we heard so many of these arguments in the past from many similar quarters that we now hear in this country, about our participation in Vietnam.

One of those is the one that you have heard most often from French governments—was the one about our credulity—"Will anybody ever listen to France if we withdraw from—" the most dramatic one, of course, was Algeria, but also from Morocco and Tunisia before that—"What will France's word be worth?"

Another popular argument at the time was: "We are letting down our allies, our American friends." Very many French leaders would argue: "Our American friends would be let down because we are holding on for strategic reasons in North Africa: The naval bases in Morocco and Tunisia."

There was another argument that the French leadership used to use against departing from their colonies. This one was or would be the economic one that we heard some of yesterday. I was privileged to listen to some of the testimony yesterday, the argument that these colonies in North Africa were essential, vital to French national interests, economically as well as strategically and politically.

The fourth and very principal argument, was the military one, somewhat associated with the prestige one, but the one that goes: So many of our sons have fought here and died here, and to leave after this would be a disgrace to France, dishonor to our sons"—arguments you hear, obviously, passionately in this country now.

BLOOD BATH ARGUMENT

Another one that was strongly argued and at least I seem to hear reverberations in America now, is the one, is the economic one I was alluding to and it is also the one that goes familiarly into the night of the long knives.

The CHAIRMAN. Blood bath?

Mr. WHITE. Pardon?

The CHAIRMAN. Blood bath?

Mr. WHITE. Blood bath is the phrase.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what they called it.

Mr. WHITE. It was argued if the French were to leave any one of those places from Vietnam down through Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, that our friends, i.e., the regimes that the French had put in place—they used to argue they were duly elected—frequently some kind of an electoral process had been gone through—but not many of us kidded ourselves that they were really bona fide democratically elected in our sense of the word, but in any event, however, they were or—or how they got there, to depart and leave there was tantamount to condemning them to death.

I think that the members of the committee would have to be hard pressed not to figure out whatever happened to all those people. You know there wasn't all that big a blood bath. In the case of Vietnam before, a few ministers, a few French creatures like Bao Dai suddenly found it much more healthy to live in villas on the French Riviera than to stay where they were, but they had villas on the Riviera anyhow, most of them. So the notion that when the French presence, as the French like to use the word, departed from any of these places that the French credulity would be attacked, French word in international circles would lose force and authority, that the economy would be wrecked, that people would be killed—none of these things, in fact, in my opinion, came to pass.

To be sure, many French graveyards contain the bodies of young Frenchmen, brave young Frenchmen, who died in Vietnam and that is to be deplored; but the notion that—well, let me put it another way: The French franc at that time during this period of the 1940's, early 1950's, the French franc was about 600 to the dollar in the black market, if my recollection is correct. I confess to having exchanged some dollars in those days at that price. The French franc is very strong—4 to 1 to the dollar—4 to 1, and strengthening every day, so in terms of what it did to the French economy and what it did to the French voice, I think it is heard as loudly in the world as it was before, before Algeria, before leaving Indochina.

DANGEROUS TO DRAW TOO MANY PARALLELS

I think it is always dangerous to draw too many parallels. As a professional correspondent, I am not in the parallel-drawing business, but I do think it is worth noting, to the people whose concern this whole affair is, some of those things that were directly predicted and as related, referred to in this present context, at least in the case of the French in Indochina and the French in North Africa, those things substantially did not transpire.

I think I would like to leave it there, but I would invite the Chair to ask me any questions in areas that he feels I can be of any enlightenment.

(Take 1 and take 2 of Frank White's dispatch of January 22, 1968, follow:)

SAIGON, *January 22, 1968.*

To: Lang for Farmer, New York.
From: Frank White, Saigon.

In December 1945, Hanoi was a strange and stricken town, restive, covered with a film of red dust raised, more often than not, by crowds of tense demonstrators moving in the streets. Most of the demonstrators carried streamers identifying them as "Viet Minh" but there was also a profusion of non-Communist groups, less numerous and less well organized, marching in counter demonstrations. Whatever their political identification, the processions invariably headed for a dark red building then called "Le Palais Du Gouvernement" inside of which lived a frail lonely man named Ho Chi Minh.

Late in 1945 Ho had proclaimed the independence of the state of Vietnam "within the French union." In discussions with French representatives in Hanoi, notably with Sainteny, who was chief of the French mission, Ho was trying to iron out precisely what the term "independence within the French union" really meant. The negotiations were not going well. For one thing, the French themselves disagreed on the whole question of independence. Sainteny and his group proposed to give Vietnam something akin to "commonwealth status" with substantial autonomy in many fields, including its own army.

The arrival of the first French troops Dec. 19th, and the way they arrived further darkened the scene. Under the Yalta Agreement, British troops from the Indian Army constituted the Allied Occupation Force in the south of Vietnam, below the 16th parallel. In Tonkin the Chinese had been given the occupation assignment. The Chinese under Marshall Lu Han (the "other Chinese Gimo") had devoted themselves to looting the country systematically of everything of value they could find.

This, then, was the situation when I arrived in Hanoi. At the time I was a young major in the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in Saigon, there had been an OSS detachment in Hanoi but it had been recalled. My mission was to replace the Hanoi group. In the absence of any other official Americans, my assignment was to report political developments in Tonkin to the War Department and to the State Department. With me were a radio operator and a cryptographer. With our radio and "one-time pad" code books, we set up operations in a couple of rooms on the top floor of the Metropole Hotel. I sent a message to Ho Chi Minh, identifying myself and asked to be received.

For the chronicle of what happened after our arrival in Hanoi, via a U.S. Airforce C-46 cargo plane from Canton, I now rely without too much confidence on memories of 22 years ago. The dispatches I sent to my own rear base at Singapore for forwarding to Washington may or may not still exist in CIA archives. In any event I haven't seen them.

But the overall scene remains as vivid as a flash of lightning against a towering storm. There were the mobs in the streets. Chinese troops continued to file out of Hanoi, carrying their loot in bullock carts, captured Japanese trucks and even on their backs. They took everything—plumbing fixtures, tiles off the roofs, furniture and even stripped pipes of buildings. And into the port of Haiphong steamed the flotilla, loaded with French troops, under the command of an angry and frustrated General (later Marshal) LeClerc.

All the elements of the combustive explosion were there. Would the French fire on the pillaging Chinese? How would the Vietnamese, already bloodied in skirmishes with the French in various parts of the country, react to the sight of a French reinvestment of their capital city? I sat in a waterfront cafe in Haiphong and watched the incoming heavy cruiser "Richelieu", then the only capital ship in the French navy, lob shells into the foothills behind the port city. These, it turned out later, constituted a show of force rather than an attack but the shelling served to heighten tensions another notch.

At the epicenter of all this sat Ho Chi Minh who invited me to call on him shortly after the French landing at Haiphong.

Ho received me late in the afternoon. Save for a doorman he appeared to be alone in the big palace. I sat with him in the main "salon" in the front of the building, both of us side by side in straight-backed chairs, a small table between us. We were undisturbed for the next two hours. There were no interruptions, no secretaries, no telephone calls, no messengers. This by itself was strange, given the conflict and tumult outside. At one juncture a male servant produced tea and left. Ho wore the traditional high buttoned tunic, floppy pants of the same khaki material. His beard was then wispy and his manner curiously detached. I was unprepared for a person so slight.

I began the conversation, explaining that I had come to report on events then happening in Vietnam and to transmit whatever messages he might want passed to U.S. authorities in Washington. I can't remember the conversation in detail, of course, but the general burden of his remarks are still with me. The conversation began in French but he later switched to English. He begged my pardon, saying that he would like to use his English which he rarely had occasion to do. The fact was that his English was better than my French.

He had no specific messages he wanted to transmit, but he said he was glad that there was interest in the United States in what was transpiring in this far away corner of the globe.

We wondered if Americans knew how strongly the Vietnamese people desired independence. He went back to the history of early Chinese invasions, then reviewed the French occupation and finally the past five years under the Japanese. In great detail he developed our theme, the burden of which was that no matter who the occupier, the Vietnamese people had always been determined to resist. At no juncture in this recital did he refer in any way to himself or even to the Communist Party, although he was to mention the latter later on.

The second part of the conversation had to do with the present situation and what it implied for the future of the country. For a man who had spent most of the last five years hidden in the jungles of northwest Tonkin with a price on his head, he passed over the Japanese invasion of recent history with little comment.

He talked at greater length about the Chinese who were still streaming out of the city. The hardship and destruction they had caused in their relatively brief stay brought him, it seemed to me, very close to tears, especially their brutal treatment of Vietnamese women.

But what Ho really wanted to talk about wasn't the past but his country's prospects for the future. He referred to the past mainly to underscore the resiliency and determination of the people. Having made his case for the will of the Vietnamese to be independent, he then began to discuss what they would need to realize a better future. It was mainly in this context that he mentioned France, the Soviet Union and the United States, in that order.

As for France, Ho said that in many ways the French had been helpful to the country and that a special "sympathie" existed between the French and "our people". He continued by saying that he felt that many French recognized finally that times had changed and that the traditional colonial form of rule had to end. He believed that men like Sainteny and others understood this and were prepared to cede real independence to Vietnam over a period of years. However, he could not be sure. He could not be certain that the arrangements he was reaching with French representatives in Hanoi would be honored either in Saigon or in Paris. Only time would tell that. Nor, he continued, could he be sure that many of his own people would be willing to trust the French or abide the delays. He asked me if I had seen the crowds in the streets. When I said that I had but was not sure what they meant, he replied: "For many of our people, patience has come to an end."

He then brought up the Soviet Union. It was only at this juncture that he mentioned anything about himself personally. He referred to his young days as a "idealist" and his resulting troubles with French police. He mentioned that a sister had been maltreated and imprisoned in the penal colony at Poulo Condor as a result of his activity. Eventually he had gone to the Soviet Union, he said, and studied the teachings of Marx and Lenin. He did not dwell on this much except to say that he believed that revolution had benefited the Russian people and that he had become a believer in Communism. But he went on to say that he did not believe that the Soviet Union either could or would make any kind of a real contribution to building of what he called a new Vietnam in the near future.

It was in this context that he asked me if I had seen any of the Vietnamese countryside. I confessed I had seen but little of the south and none of the north. Then he went into a lengthy description of the economy of the country, particularly stressing its dependence on rice. What we really need, he said, is large investments of money and machines—at first to repair and improve our dike system and then later, when we are self sufficient in food, the means to make us a modern country in the industrial sense. Then he asked me if I thought the Russians at present could make such a contribution. I said I didn't know. Then he answered his own question by describing his understanding of the destruction that the war had caused in the Soviet Union (remember, this was 1946) and concluded that the Russians would have their hands full "for the next decade" in rebuilding their own country.

The United States, Ho said, was probably in the best position to aid Vietnam in the post-war years. He said that we had emerged from the war with enormous power and prestige in the world. He also mentioned that America was a Pacific power and therefore would logically have a particular interest in the area. He also dwelled at some length on the disposition of Americans as a people to be sympathetic to self determination of nations and generous in making contributions to less fortunate states. But here again he doubted that the United States Government could be counted on to come to the aid of Vietnam. He said he felt that the U.S. Government would find more urgent things to do. He said something to the affect that, after all, Vietnam, is a small country and far away. Vietnam could not be expected to loom large in the preoccupations of the United States.

In short, he was saying that he hoped America would interest itself in Vietnam but he didn't believe, in the final analysis, we would.

It was quite dark when I left the palace. He had given me no specific messages or requests to transmit. I returned to the metropole. We had made no firm plans to meet again.

Thus it came as a surprise to receive a message from Ho a few moments after returning to the hotel. The message read that he regretted the short notice, but would I care to come to a reception he was giving that same evening at the palace? The invitation sounded quite casual and extemporaneous, but I changed uniforms and was back at the palace by 7 p.m. It turned out to be an extraordinary evening.

There were three other guests with Ho when I was ushered into the same salon we'd met in before. All three were Vietnamese. Two were elderly men in mandarin robes and headpieces. The third was much younger. He wore white shorts and an open neck white shirt. The latter was introduced to me as "the provisional minister of national defense." He was Nguyen Van Giap. At the time the name held little significance. Nor could I engage him in much conversation either in French or English. The two elders turned out to be provisional ministers also—of education and cultural affairs, or some such. At the time I felt that I was simply being given an opportunity to meet some of Ho's official family informally. Rose wine was served.

Then suddenly other guests began arriving. Through the double doors of the big room burst General Leclerc gripping his white malacca cane, followed by Generals Valluy and Salan, Sainteny, and finally Colonel Mirmanbeau, LeClerc's chief of staff. This was the first team for the French military in Indo-China. I knew them well and they knew me. At the time I was on General Leclerc's staff as the liaison officer for our Saigon detachment of OSS. Although my association with Leclerc had always been cordial, the French never concealed their irritation and distrust of OSS. LeClerc and company had not looked for me that night at Ho Chi Minh's or for that matter for anyone else.

But even the French were startled to see the next group of arrivals. In came the field commander of Lu Han's Chinese army and his chief of staff. The greetings exchanged on all sides were glacial. And finally, representing the British commander in Indo-China, came Lt. Col. Trevor Wilson, the chief of MI–5 in Hanoi.

We did not make a cozy group. When dinner was announced I wasn't prepared for that either. At first I wasn't sure that I was invited for dinner. Ho's note to me had only mentioned "a reception." Befitting my modest rank I held back until all the others had found their places and were seated at the table. If there hadn't been an empty chair I was prepared to slink away. But there was—and it was next to Ho's. I sat down.

The dinner was a horror. The French confined themselves to the barest minimum of conversation and scarcely spoke to the Chinese. For their part the Chinese got drunk "gam be-ing" everyone around the table. At one point I spoke to Ho very quietly. "I think Mr. President there is some resentment over the seating arrangement at this table." I meant of course my place next to him. "Yes," he replied, "I can see that. But who else could I talk to?"

I saw Ho Chi Minh several other times in the course of the weeks I stayed on in Hanoi but none of these encounters were memorable. There were plenty of developments to report to Washington including Ho's decision to go to Paris to finish his negotiations with the French Government.

One person who had seen a good deal of Ho before this period and for some time thereafter was my British colleague, Trevor Wilson. Wilson was the first British officer in Hanoi after the Japanese surrendered and later became Britain's first consul general accredited to Ho Chi Minh's provisional government. He is still around this part of the world. Now 65, Wilson is winding up his career as public information officer for the British Embassy in Laos.

Trevor and I dined together the other night in Vientiane. I wouldn't want it mentioned in print but Wilson's memory isn't all that good these days. But he remembered the dinner we went to that night in Hanoi. In fact he still has somewhere in his possession the menu that was served autographed by most of the people at the table. My own souvenir of the night was an autographed picture of himself that Ho sent me at the hotel the following day. Across it were written the words: "To my good friend, Commandant White, Sincerely, Ho Chi Minh."

Wilson recalls Ho "As a man of great sincerity." Except for official occasions, says Wilson, he lived as a hermit. He never wore anything save the same khaki tunics, one way or the other. He left in March. I returned to Saigon.

Trevor and I dined together the other night in Vientiane. I wouldn't want it mentioned in print but Wilson's memory isn't all that good these days. But he remembered the dinner we went to that night in Hanoi. In fact he still has somewhere in his possession the menu that was served autographed by most of the people at the table. My own souvenir of the night was an autographed picture completely unadorned by any decorations or designations. Wilson does not recall Ho drinking anything other then tea or an occasional bottle of soda.

Apparently Ho held considerable affection for Wilson. Wilson occupied a villa just adjacent to the government palace grounds. Occasionally Ho would drop over unannounced to talk. He invariably came alone. Once Ho invited Wilson to attend a soccer match with him. As part of the ceremonies, Ho was supposed to kick the ball to start the game. Wilson recalls it as a rather pathetic sight watching a man as frail as Ho trying to kick the ball but he gave it a determined try.

As one of the few, if not the only, western diplomat in Hanoi at the time, Wilson was often called on to intervene with Ho's government. When he couldn't get action through regular channels, Wilson appealed directly to Ho. "He always told the truth to me," says Wilson, "but you had to tell him the truth, too." One such occasion involved a request from the French to do something about the plight of 14 French officers being held by the Communists somewhere in the country. Ho insist Wilson give him the exact name of each of the Frenchmen, find out where they were (apparently had no means or didn't want to find out for himself) and finally Wilson must submit a document giving his (Wilson's) word that the Frenchmen, when apprehended, had not been in the country seeking to harm the people of Vietnam.

Wilson had no difficulty getting the names from the French, but he did have to hire some Chinese underworld types to locate the prison where they were being held. Wilson also ascertained that the Frenchmen had been part of a group trying to rescue other Frenchmen in the country and, as such, had no military or espionage motives. This much established, Ho handed Wilson a note addressed to the commander of the jail where the Frenchmen were held. Wilson personally went to the jail and the commander honored Ho's note.

Over the period of time Wilson knew Ho—from September 1945 until December 1946—Wilson found that Ho Chi Minh rarely discussed his personal life. He did, however, talk about his first trip to Europe as a "Plongeur" on a messagerie maritime steamer and also, later, as a dishwasher at the Savoy in London. Similarly Ho rarely mentioned anything about his family—only the sister he spoke to me about. "I often wondered how he became so well-educated and so well informed," says Wilson, "particularly in view of the fact he had so little formal schooling and spent so much of his life in hiding."

It is curious to say the least that no one I've met who knew Ho Chi Minh ever found him exhibiting the qualities of tough mindedness or authoritarianism that are normally the hallmark the political being particularly the communist political animal. In observing Ho in that historically turbulent period of '45–46, Trevor Wilson noticed this anomaly. His explanation is that the hard core communist revolutionaries around Ho, notably Van Giap, recognized that given the traditionalist nature of the Vietnamese people, they needed a father type image as the head of their movement and that the personality of Ho Chi Minh was ideally suited to their purposes. Wilson is persuaded that Ho was not consulted or a party to most of the brutal measures that the regime took, particularly those against landholding peasants.

The end of their association seems to support this view, at least in Wilson's opinion.

Ho left Paris in the late spring or early summer of 1946. This fiasco of the Fontainbleau talks from the Vietnamese point of view had been glossed over under a meaningless communique. Ho took a slow boat back to Vietnam, landing in the South (Wilson is unsure exactly where, but probably Saigon). Admiral Thierry D'Argenlieu, the French high commissioner, met the boat and kissed Ho on both cheeks.

However intended, D'Argenlieu's embrace very nearly became the kiss of death for Ho Chi Minh. Between the time of his final return to Hanoi in October until

December 19th when the Viet Minh attacked and finally occupied Hanoi, Ho became a virtual prisoner of his own regime. "I could never see him alone again," recalls Wilson. "They moved him from one residence to another. He could never speak to me privately." One of the last occasions they saw each other was early in December. Wilson had called to deliver an important letter of state. (Not for use, it was a communication from Nehru). Ho, according to Wilson, read the letter, smiled wistfully and said, "Just tell him I have received his message."

The CHAIRMAN. Just a couple of questions and then I will go to Mr. Moffat.

WAS HO REPRESENTATIVE OF RUSSIANS? INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM?

Your description there of your meeting with Ho was a very moving one. Did you get the impression that he was acting as an agent for the Russians? Did he convey to you an attitude that he was there as a representative of Russia?

Mr. WHITE. No, certainly not.

The CHAIRMAN. How about China, did you get the impression that he was there as an agent of international communism?

Mr. WHITE. No, quite the contrary was the case; obviously the Chinese Communists were 2 years away from taking power in China at the time, or 3, but quite the contrary, he dwelt at really extraordinary length on traditional hostility between his own people and the Chinese people. It was exacerbated by the fact they were there looting his country; he dwelt very much on it.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he refer to Mao Tse-tung as having been one of his principal sponsors, friend or otherwise?

Mr. WHITE. He did not.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he refer to him at all?

Mr. WHITE. He did not mention Mao Tse-tung at all.

The CHAIRMAN. Well——

Mr. WHITE. Nor, I confess, did I ask him anything about Mao Tse-tung, either.

The CHAIRMAN. But our policy used to be justified on the ground that he was a representative of an international Communist conspiracy and was merely a cat's paw in the service of that conspiracy.

Mr. WHITE. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. But your impression doesn't confirm that?

Mr. WHITE. No, sir; it was not. As I say, when he did discuss the Soviet Union, he said, "I don't think there is much that we here can look for in terms of any kind of aid, moral, political or economic."

HO THOUGHT U.S. WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC

The CHAIRMAN. But he did think the United States would be sympathetic to his striving for independence?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he know anything about Franklin Roosevelt's views?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, he did. He wanted to know more.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he believe that our Government would assist him, if not materially at least morally, that we would be in support of it or not?

Mr. White. Yes, he said that he felt that as a young country struggling for its independence, that Vietnam would find sympathy from the American people and from the U.S. Government.

The Chairman. Being as well-informed, apparently, as you say he was striving to be, he still did not think that Vietnam would ever attract the attention of the United States? He was afraid Vietnam would not attract attention; the U.S. would not take interest in it?

Mr. White. That's right. He said that he felt it ranked well down on the list of U.S. preoccupations.

The Chairman. He was not a very good prophet, was he?

[Laughter.]

The Chairman. I think it is extremely interesting and so convincing as to how completely misguided we were.

AVAILABILITY OF REPORTS

One last question:

You did report what you are telling us?

Mr. White. Oh, yes.

The Chairman. To our government?

Mr. White. Right.

The Chairman. You don't know whether those reports are in the State Department or in the Defense Department or where they are?

Mr. White. I cannot say, sir.

The Chairman. Did you later ever see any of the people to whom you reported in the United States and discuss this matter?

Mr. White. No, I did not. It is curious.

The Chairman. Who was the head of the OSS at that time when you were there? Was it Donovan? Who was the head?

Mr. White. General Donovan was still alive, yes, sir; and very active.

The Chairman. Was he the head of OSS?

Mr. White. Yes, sir.

The Chairman. In Washington?

Mr. White. In Washington; yes, sir.

The Chairman. If those reports came through, would they come in the normal course of events to him or his office?

Mr. White. Sir, Mr. Chairman, we understood our reports were distributed, were made available, by OSS——

The Chairman. To the State Department?

Mr. White. To the State Department and to the War Department.

The Chairman. Have you ever made inquiries whether any of those reports are still in existence?

Mr. White. I have never made a formal one. I have seen—I have had friends who have been in CIA and I have said, I have often wondered aloud where they might have gone but I never——

The Chairman. Could you help our staff identify those reports, get more detail so we could initiate a request for them?

Mr. White. Yes, certainly, of course, I will try.

The Chairman. It would be interesting at least to inquire as to whether or not those reports were available. I think they would be historical documents. They are not in the Pentagon Papers, I suppose.

Do you know whether your documents were transferred to the custody of the CIA or not?

Mr. White. I have no firsthand, personal knowledge of that, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. All right.

Thank you very much. We will come back to you.

The Chairman. I would like to now ask Mr. Moffat if you would give us your statement. It is very interesting. You just stay there and we will probably pursue this later.

STATEMENT OF ABBOT LOW MOFFAT, FORMER CHIEF, DIVISION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Moffat. Senator, I have been asked to present a statement of my recollections of the handling of the Indochina problem in the Department of State——

The Chairman. Before you go on that, are you aware of the reports? Did these reports come to you?

Mr. Moffat. I saw some of them, sir.

The Chairman. Good.

Mr. Moffat. I can't—I will come to that later.

The Chairman. Yes.

Mr. Moffat. We saw much less of the Indochina reports than we—I saw of the Siamese. I had close working relations with the OSS on the Siamese matters. I never could get it established on the Indochina ones. I think all the OSS files are in the custody of the CIA and they are in St. Louis, because I tried to get hold of some in connection with some research I was doing on Siam and I think that is where they are.

The Chairman. Thank you very much, but go ahead. We will come back to that after you make your statement.

Mr. White. Well, I was asked to present a statement of my recollections of the handling of the Indochina problem in and during the immediate postwar period 1945–1947, at which time I was Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs.

I would like, Senator, to congratulate the committee on the excellent Study No. 2 prepared by Robert M. Blum of your staff. The two papers in the study are extremely competent summaries, it seems to me, and I doubt that I can add anything except perhaps to place a slightly different emphasis on certain points.

The Chairman. I appreciate very much your comment on that, Mr. Moffat.

Mr. Moffat. It is not possible to understand some of the developments in 1945 without knowledge of what happened before. Until the spring of 1944, the Office of Far Eastern Affairs had no jurisdiction over those areas of the Far East which were colonies of European countries, important though those colonies might be in Far Eastern policy questions.

The British Commonwealth desk and the Western European desk in the Office of European Affairs handled the problems and policies concerning all British, French, Dutch and Portuguese colonies as integral parts of relations with the mother countries.

ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

In the spring of 1944, however, there was established in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs a new Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, the name of which was later changed to Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, as our major activities clearly related to Southeast Asia other than the Philippines. To this division was given primary jurisdiction of matters relating to Thailand and concurrent jurisdiction with the appropriate European desk of matters relating to the European colonies in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific Ocean. The significant word in that statement is "concurrent." It meant that neither the European nor the Far Eastern Divisions had the power to act without the concurrence of the other, so that whichever division might be opposed to affirmative or innovative action could prevent such action; and in practice, moreover, it proved almost impossible to raise conflicting views for resolution at higher levels as we were directed to agree before consideration would be given to our recommendations.

Lawrence Salisbury was named chief of the new division and on his resignation from the department about two months later I was designated to succeed him and served in that capacity until July 1947.

NATIONALIST SENTIMENT BECOMING IMPORTANT FORCE IN S.E. ASIA

There had been many hopes and generalities uttered about the postwar world including not least the Atlantic Charter, and the colonial powers from time to time spoke vaguely of more self-government for their colonies after the war. As we considered the prewar nationalist movements in Southeast Asia and studied such reports as we then had from the area, we reached the conclusion that nationalist sentiment was becoming an important force in Southeast Asia. We felt that not only to accomplish self-government which traditional American policy has always favored, but also to capture the nationalist movements in behalf of the war effort our allies should be urged to be specific in what they proposed to do after the war.

BRIEFING PAPER FOR PRESIDENT'S USE AT SECOND QUEBEC CONFERENCE

Our division prepared, therefore, a briefing paper for the President's use at the Second Quebec Conference in September 1944, which was initialed by all the appropriate divisions and offices and was signed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, on September 8.

I would like to quote from that memorandum as it appears in Mr. Hull's memoirs because it states our government's goal at that time and because of its reference to trusteeships:

> In this memorandum we suggested the value of "early, dramatic and concerted announcements by the nations concerned making definite commitments as to the future of the regions of Southeast Asia." We added: "It would be especially helpful if such concerted announcements could include (1) specific dates when independence or complete (dominion) self-government will be accorded, (2) specific steps to be taken to develop native capacity for self-rule, and (3) a pledge of economic autonomy and equality of economic treatment toward other nations.
>
> Such announcements might well be accompanied by . . . a pledge to establish a regional commission. The value of such concerted announcements would be still further enhanced if each of the colonial powers concerned would pledge a formal declaration of trusteeship under an international organization for the period of tutelage; but it might be unwise for the United States to attempt to insist upon such a declaration of trusteeship by one country if similar dec-

larations could not be secured from the others. In addition to their great value as psychological warfare, such announcements would appear to be directly in line with American postwar interest."

Although Mr. Hull wrote the memorandum, the President warmly approved the idea the Secretary presented, so far as I know, no effort was made to seek such concerted announcements, presumably because of the implacable opposition of Mr. Churchill to the trusteeship principle and to any discussion of British territories.

GROUNDSWELL OF NATIONALISM ENGULFING S.E. ASIA

While the European Divisions had initiated the memorandum because, I believe, of its importance in psychological warfare, I did not feel that they were entirely happy with the more basic objective. From then on and as more and more information was received, one of our major tasks during the whole time that I was with the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs was to try to convince the European Divisions of the mounting groundswell of nationalism which was engulfing all Southeast Asia and, indeed, before I left the division, Southern Asia as well.

Their concern, of course, focused on our relations with the major European powers; rather naturally they tended to consider the colonial problems in Southeast Asia as of relatively minor importance.

I well recall one senior officer asking me one day. "Why are you concerning yourself with Indonesia? It's only a Dutch colony." There seemed to be little understanding of what was happening in Southeast Asia. Time and again the nationalist movements were characterized as simply the effect of Japanese propaganda. There was also, I felt, little concept of the effect on the people of Southeast Asia of seeing the Europeans driven from the area by the Japanese, and no thought seemed to be given to the effect of the massive, indeed total, dislocation of the economic and social life of these people under the impact of the changes wrought by the war. We felt strongly that the colonial powers could not pick up where they had been forced to leave off or even with an allowance for 4 years of political development.

We became convinced that during the 4 years of war nationalistic sentiment had progressed faster and farther than it would have evolved during 20 or more years of peace.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S VIEW ON INDOCHINA

As is well known, President Roosevelt during 1943 and the first half of 1944 expressed frequently the view that Indochina should be taken from the French at the end of the war and placed under international trusteeship pending full independence, and I might say at my level we never got—I don't think we had any memories of that conversation—of those conversations—at all that the President had, but this next one became our bible, I might say.

As late as February, 1944, the department in a memorandum to the President proposed to proceed on the assumption that French armed forces would be employed to some extent in military operations to free Indochina from the Japanese, and that it would be desirable in the civil affairs administration of the country to employ French nationals having an intimate knowledge of the country. The President endorsed this memorandum simply and succinctly: "No French help in Indochina--country on trusteeship."

We in the Southeast Asia Division strongly favored the President's desire for Indochina and I hoped that he had some as yet secret plan by which he expected to effect such trusteeship, for we were unable to see how it could be implemented without applying the same policy to the British and Dutch colonies in the area. I felt therefore that we should at least voice our reservation which I did in the memorandum sent to the President on September 8.

BRITISH SUPPORT OF FRENCH RETURN TO INDOCHINA

During the weeks following the second Quebec Conference, British support of a French return to Indochina became increasingly apparent. A large French military mission was attached to the South East Asia Command—SEAC—and the British SOE, corresponding to our OSS, who were actively engaged in undercover operations in Indochina, were ordered by the Foreign Office to devote their efforts solely to the French and to have nothing to do with Annamite or other native organizations.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S HOPE FOR TRUSTEESHIP FOR INDOCHINA

These and other facts were called to the President's attention in November, together with an OSS statement that the British and Dutch had arrived at agreement regarding the future of Southeast Asia and were now about to bring the French into the picture. The President reacted sharply. American approval must not be given to any French military mission, he directed; all our people and also the British, Dutch and French must understand that we expected to be consulted on the future of Indochina; and then the significant remark insofar as trusteeship was concerned: "We have made no final decisions on the future of Indochina."

The conference at Yalta took place some weeks later and on April 3 the Secretary of State issued a statement with the President's approval that the United States, as a result of the Yalta talks, looked to trusteeship as a postwar arrangement only for territories taken from the enemy and such territories as might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship. As the French clearly had no intention of voluntarily placing Indochina under trusteeship, Mr. Stettinius' statement marked the public end of Mr. Roosevelt's earlier hope for a trusteeship for Indochina.

FRENCH PRESSED FOR U.S. HELP IN RECOVERING INDOCHINA

As the war approached its climax, the French, through the British, pressed harder for American help in the recovery of Indochina from the Japanese and for an active part in such operation, and also for a formal civil affairs agreement. As late as January 1945, the President was adamant that he did not want the United States to be mixed up in any decisions affecting the future of Indochina. Those were for the postwar period and he did not want to get mixed up in any military effort to liberate Indochina from the Japanese. But the French did not give up. When in March Japan ousted the collaborationist regime in Indochina and took over direct control, several thousand French troops briefly opposed the Japanese before crossing into China and the French asked for supplies and assistance from the 14th Air Force in China. Although the President disapproved the release of a statement suggested by the Department explaining that the United States would give such help as it could be consistent with the operations and plans to which it was committed, the Department and the Joint Chiefs authorized the 14th Air Force, in aid of the French, to undertake operations against the Japanese in Indochina provided such action did not interfere with other planned operations.

CONFLICT OF VIEWPOINT BETWEEN SOUTHEAST ASIAN DIVISION AND EUROPEAN OFFICE

During this period we in the Southeast Asian Division had increasingly the impression that the European Office favored the outright return of Indochina to France and had little real concern about autonomy or self-rule or even of increased native participation in the government. An indication of this arose when a briefing memorandum should, we felt, be prepared for the President for the Yalta Conference. We knew we could not get concurrence in a statement about Indochina that would meet our views, so we circulated again the memorandum signed by Mr. Hull on September 8. This time the European Divisions declined to initial the document they had initialed less than 6 months before. No briefing paper concerning Southeast Asia accompanied the President to Yalta, so far as I know.

The net result of all this was that as the war in Europe ended, the Department had no agreed policy regarding the future of Indochina. The European Office and the Western Europe Division, confronted with the major problems relating to a hoped-for resurgence of France in Europe, believed that our relations with France were of paramount interest to the United States, that we should not risk jeopardizing them in any way over a French colony which in any event was no business of ours, and in all good faith thought it was not in our best interests even to press for reform in Indochina because it might embarrass our relations with the French.

Indeed, a senior officer in the European Office told me some two years later when war between the French and Vietnamese had begun, that if he could have had his way American troops would have been used to restore the French to power in Indochina.

On the other hand, we in the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs felt that the United States had definite responsibilities with regard to Indochina. It was our military power that would liberate Indochina from Japan; the French in Indochina had collaborated with the Japanese; they had not even attempted to honor their protectorate responsibilities; there was a strong nationalist movement among the Vietnamese who had for centuries comprised a proud and independent country; and future peace and stability in the area depended, we felt, on a recognition of the natural aspirations of the peoples of the area. My personal hope was that the French would grant independence to the peoples of Indochina, but I did not feel we should carry our support of the Indochinese to the point of a break with our ally. France, weak as she then was, was still a stronger and more valuable ally to us than Indochina would be if we had to make a choice between the two and France which was striving to rebuild its strength and regain its soul needed our help, not a fracturing of relations. But I disagreed totally with the European Office in its opposition to putting pressure on the French to do what I felt was not only in our interest but also actually in the interest of France.

This conflict of viewpoints came to a head a week after President Roosevelt's death, when a memorandum for President Truman was prepared in the European Office and sent to the Far Eastern Office for concurrence. Instead, we prepared an alternative draft memorandum for the President.

CONCERNS OF DIVISION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS

Our first concern was that the EUR memorandum did not give the new President the background information which we thought rightfully he should have as to President Roosevelt's views or the recent history of Indochina.

Our second concern was that while we recognized that it would be contrary to American interests to break with France over the question of Indochinese independence, we were not prepared to accept as adequate statements about exerting influence in the direction of having the French liberalize their past policies. We could and we should, we believed, be very specific and actually use the power we had to try to secure self-government in Indochina. The French had indicated an intention to change their prewar policies toward Indochina even though their various statements, in our opinion, seemed inadequate to the situation and unlikely to assure peace and stability in the country. We felt their change in attitude had been due to a realization of the anti-French independence sentiment among the Indochinese who must be wooed if French administration was to be successful and, secondly, to uncertainty as to our attitude add a feeling that our support for the restoration of Indochina to France could be secured only by adoption of a more liberal policy. If we informed the French, as proposed in the EUR memorandum, that we would not oppose the return of Indochina we would negate our influence in securing French policies consonant with our interests.

We wrote:

> Because the liberation of Indochina is, in fact, dependent on American defeat of Japan, because we are sacrificing blood and treasure to assure peace and stability in the Far East, postwar maintenance of which will be largely our responsibility, because without recognition of the dynamic trends toward self-government among the peoples of Asia, there can be no peace and stability in the Far East and the peoples of Southeast Asia may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a pan-Asiatic movement against all western powers, FE believes—that is, Far Eastern Office—believes that it would not be unreasonable for the United States to insist that the French give adequate assurances as to the implementing of policies in Indochina which we consider essential to assure peace and stability in the Far East.
>
> We urge, therefore, that the policy of the United States should be not to oppose the restoration of Indochina to France, provided the French give adequate assurances as to the following:

Then we listed five points of which (a) is pertinent here:

(a) Development of a national or federal government to be run for and increasingly by the Indochinese themselves with no special privileges for French or other persons who are not inhabitants and citizens of Indochina so that within the foreseeable future Indochina can be fully self-governing and autonomous along democratic lines, except in matters of imperial concern in which Indochina should be a partner in the French Union.

EUROPEAN OFFICE'S VIEWPOINT

The European viewpoint was expressed by Mr. Dunn who, on reading our paper, said he believed it would be better to let the matter drift rather than base United States policy on the FE version of the Indochina paper. He believed that we should draw close to Great Britain and France the two strongest Western European countries; we should attempt to remove sources of friction between France and the United States and try to allay her apprehensions that we were going to propose that territory be taken from her.

"We should use our influence to improve the government of Indochina," he said, "but should not interfere." He wanted wholehearted cooperation with France and indicated that he share Bidault's fear for western civilization as a result of the dominance of Russia in Europe.

FRENCH INTEREST

In our view, pressures for specific reforms would not, of course, be liked by the French but they would not cause a break in our friendship or fundamental support. We felt that what we were seeking was actually in the French interest as well as our own; self-government would release the French from the heavy economic drain which Indochina had been for years to everyone but the Banque de l'Indochine; and with her long association with the Indochinese, France would easily conserve her cultural influence and would clearly be a favored country in international economic relations.

Admittedly, the inferiority complex from which France was suffering as a result of the war was turning French thoughts to dreams of a restored imperial glory rather than to more prosaic problems of substantive economic and practical power, but I thought this obstacle not so great as to preclude us from pressing for what seemed to us both right and sensible.

COMPROMISE QUALITY PAPER

While both Mr. Grew, who was Acting Secretary of State in the absence of Mr. Stettinius in San Francisco, and Mr. Phillips who was acting as head of the European Office for Mr. Dunn, agreed with the policy paper which we submitted, Mr. Grew gave instructions that a new paper must be drafted on which both the European Office and the Far Eastern Office would agree. My friend, the late Samuel Reber, represented EUR during the ensuing discussions and I represented FE.

The compromise paper was a sincere attempt to reach a policy on which all could agree as we both recognized that the Department could have only one policy toward Indochina, not two.

Basically, we agreed that the President should be furnished pertinent facts which either EUR or FE thought important; but instead of conditioning nonopposition to the return of Indochina to France upon the receiving of assurance on five major points, we recommended that we approach the French, explain our interest and concern, and ask the French to give some positive indication of their intentions with respect to each of the five points.

It was certainly my view that if we had these answers we would be in a much better position to determine future policy, and that this technique would alert the French to our interest but without threat or promise. I think it must have been a good compromise paper. My own staff was horrified that I had abandoned all we had struggled for, while Jimmy Dunn sent a scorching wire from San Francisco whither Bill Phillips had forwarded the draft, totally repudiating any part of the compromise. The suggested inquiry was never sent to the French.

SITUATION IN INDOCHINA CHANGED WHEN JAPAN SURRENDERED

A few weeks later Japan surrendered and the situation in Indochina changed rapidly. The Vietnamese tried to take over all Vietnamese territory and disarm the Japanese before the Allies should arrive in Indochina. They were successful in establishing a working administration in the two northern provinces of Tonkin and Annam, but factional dissension among various independence groups in Cochin China minimized the effectiveness of their administration in that province. Nevertheless, for 20 days the Provisional Vietnamese Government ruled all the territory inhabited by Vietnamese. Then the British placed the French back in power in the area they controlled south of the 16th parallel. In the north the Vietnamese remained in power by arrangement with the Nationalist Chinese who were there to secure the disarming of the Japanese north of the 16th parallel.

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN FRENCH AND VIETNAMESE

With French forces back in Indochina and with all potential leverage gone, there was little that the United States could do to alter the outcome. We watched the negotiations between French and Vietnamese from the sidelines, encouraged when at times it seemed as if a liberal arrangement would be worked out, sorrowfully when both sides would breach agreements that had been made and when it gradually became apparent that as the French brought more military forces into the country their willingness to concede self-rule correspondingly decreased. I think both EUR and FE hoped that the French would reach an effective agreement with the Vietnam Provisional Government; but late in 1946 a concern about Communist expansion began to be evident in the Department.

We are reaping today, in my opinion, and so are all Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians, the tragedy of our fixation on the theory of monolithic, aggressive communism that began to develop at this time and to affect our objective analyses of certain problems.

I have always been convinced that if the French had worked sincerely with Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam would have evolved with a Communist regime that, it is true, but a regime that followed the interests of Vietnam first. There would have been no domination by China after China became Communist and cooperation with the Soviet Union would have been primarily as an instrument to offset Chinese pressures.

I have never met an American, be he military, OSS, diplomat, or journalist, who had met Ho Chi Minh who did not reach the same belief: that Ho Chi Minh was first and foremost a Vietnamese nationalist. He was also a Communist and believed that Communism offered the best hope for the Vietnamese people. But his loyalty was to his people. When I was in Indochina it was striking how the top echelon of competent French officials held almost unanimously the same view.

Actually, there was no alternative to an agreement with Ho Chi Minh or to a crushing of the nationalist groundswell which my own observations convinced me could not be done. Any other government recognized by the French would of necessity be puppets of the French and incapable of holding the loyalty of the Vietnamese people.

CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNIST DOMINATION OF VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

As Department concern about the Communist domination of the Vietnamese Government became more apparent and more uncritical we began, I felt, to allow our fears of such domination to overrule our better judgment; we let the nationalist feelings of the country recede in importance and we ignored the father figure that Ho Chi Minh was becoming for most Vietnamese. The French seemed not adverse to taking advantage of our increasing preoccupation with Communism.

A telegram from our consul at Hanoi, James O'Sullivan, at the end of December offered some sound cautionary advice:

"French concern over Communism," he concluded, "may well be devised to divert Department's attention from French policy in Indochina."

I always felt that we could see the situation in Southeast Asia more objectively than the British, the French, and the Dutch because we could, until the fear of Communism affected objectivity, analyze problems without the handicap of self-interest, prejudice, pride or domestic politics. I struggled to preserve Siam from excessive British pressures at the conclusion of the war.

IF FRANCE HAD GRANTED INDEPENDENCE TO VIETNAM

As to Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies, I felt it essential that these countries be granted the political independence they longed for, that by making such a grant, France, for instance, would in fact develop close ties with Vietnam because the Vietnamese had always great respect and liking for French culture and many, including Ho Chi Minh, would have liked to maintain warm ties with France and to have French advisers in posts where foreign expert help was needed.

Voluntary elimination of hated foreign control would have permitted happy and mutually beneficial relations to develop between the two countries. This was in fact the policy France successfully followed later in West Africa, but the French people felt a deep affront to their pride at the thought of giving up any sovereignty or control over Indochina just as later they suffered similar imagined loss of face over Algeria.

I still believe that had the French been willing to grant independence to Vietnam in 1946 they could have worked out an arrangement with the Vietnam government that would have protected their cultural influence and left them with an obvious advantage over all other nations in economic dealings with Vietnam.

It would have taken a greatness they did not then possess, and it would have taken a breadth of vision to see beyond the spiritual ashes from which they were rising, as Jean Monnet later had vision for Europe, but the failure to see their own true interest, misplaced ideas of prestige and glory, pressures from the Banque de l'Indochine, pressures from petty officials and those French who had settled in Indochina—not the best type of Frenchmen generally, domestic politics and the indecision arising from unstable government at home—all these conspired to make the French intransigent at the time. Whether if the concern about the extension of a monolithic Communism had not arisen at that particular moment of history the story would have ended differently, I do not know.

I was away from Washington for nearly 3 months from November 1946, to February 1947, because soon after leaving Indochina at the end of December I was ordered to go to Canberra as Adviser to the American Delegate to the South Pacific Conference. But my 2 months in Southeast Asia had confirmed, I felt, my earlier ideas and I was particularly heartsick at the outbreak of war between the French and the Vietnamese.

HO CHI MINH'S "DIRECT COMMUNIST CONNECTION"

On my return to the Department in mid-February, I found that a telegram had been sent to Paris earlier that month in an effort to exert influence toward securing a settlement with the Vietnamese. That telegram had, however, spoken sharply against the danger of Ho Chi Minh's "direct Communist connection" and our opposition to seeing a colonial administration supplanted by an administration controlled by the Kremlin. This was impeccable theory with which one could not quarrel, but it was a prejudgment of the facts for which I could find no support. So far as I was aware, no evidence to support the assumptions of a direct tie to the Kremlin had ever been received and it completely disregarded Ho Chi Minh's intense nationalism.

TELEGRAM OF MAY 13, 1947

The French presently indicated that they were seeking true representatives of the Vietnamese with whom they could negotiate. We were deeply concerned in my division because we felt that would be futile and any resulting government would be a puppet of the French. We determined to make one final try and in a telegram that was sent on May 13, 1947, we spoke of the seven new nations that were in the process of achieving or struggling to achieve independence or autonomy in southern and southeastern Asia, and that in view of the great strides toward autonomy made by other people in this area it could be dangerous if the French-Vietnamese arrangements accorded less autonomy.

We said that we felt the best safeguard against Communist control or antiwestern, pan-Asiatic tendencies would be close association between the newly autonomous peoples and the countries with which they had long been associated, but such association had to be voluntary if it was to be lasting.

A protraction of the situation then existing in Indochina could only destroy the basis for voluntary cooperation and leave a legacy of bitterness that would irrevocably alienate the Vietnamese from France and those values represented by France and other western democracies. We were inescapably concerned with the situation in the Far East generally and with those developments in Indochina which could have a profound effect on the situation. We hoped that the French would be generous in their attempt to find an early solution which, by recognizing the legitimate desires of the Vietnamese, would restore peace and deprive antidemocratic forces of a powerful weapon.

The entire telegram has also accepted the French thesis that it was the Vietnamese who initiated the fighting between the two countries. It seemed to me important to redress somewhat the onesided propaganda which the French had maintained and at least make clear the Vietnamese view of developments.

For the information of our ambassador, but with authority to repeat to the French if the occasion warranted, we said, frankly, that the French position that the fighting which began December 19 was the result of an initial Vietnamese attack seemed to us dangerously onesided as it ignored Colonel Debes' attack on Haiphong on November 23 and the "understandable Vietnamese contention that a stand had to be made at some point in view of the steady French encroachments after March 6 on the authority and territory of Vietnam," and we cited as examples the establishment of the Cochin Chinese Republic, the occupation of southern Annam and the Moi Plateau, and the Dalat plan for a French-dominated federation to which Vietnam would be subservient.

Finally, we expressed our concern lest the French efforts to find "true representatives of Vietnam" with whom to negotiate might result in the creation of an impotent puppet government along the lines of the Cochin China regime or that restoration of Bao Dai might be attempted.

I have referred to this telegram at some length because it was the last action regarding Indochina with which I was associated, because it summarized reasonably well, I think, what we had long been saying within the Department, and because it reflected also my own observations in the field and the need to understand the Vietnamese view of developments as well as the French view.

AMERICAN INFLUENCE NIL

As we had anticipated, American "influence" in the situation was nil. Two months later I transferred from the Department to the American Mission for Aid to Greece where I was the first political adviser to Governor Giswold and later liaison between the civilian side of the mission and General Van Fleet.

I had no further responsibility in connection with Indochinese affairs or personal knowledge of subsequent developments, except as I occasionally ran into people.

(Mr. Moffat's prepared statement follows:)

STATEMENT BY ABBOT LOW MOFFAT, FORMER CHIEF, DIVISION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I have been asked to present a statement of my recollections of the handling of the Indochina problem in the Department of State during the immediate postwar period, 1945–1947, at which time I was Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs.

I would like to congratulate the Committee on the excellent Study No. 2 prepared by Robert M. Blum of your staff. The two papers in the Study are extremely competent summaries, it seems to me, and I doubt that I can add anything except perhaps to place a slightly different emphasis on certain points.

It is not possible to understand some of the developments in 1945 without knowledge of what happened before. Until the spring of 1944 the Office of Far Eastern Affairs had no jurisdiction over those areas of the Far East which were colonies of European countries, important though those colonies might be in Far Eastern policy questions. The British Commonwealth desk and the Western European desk in the Office of European Affairs handled the problems and policies concerning all British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies as integral parts of relations with the mother countries. In the spring of 1944, however, there was established in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs a new Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, the name of which was later changed to Division of Southeast Asian Affairs as our major activities clearly related to Southeast Asia other than the Philippines. To this Division was given primary jurisdiction of matters relating to Thailand and concurrent jurisdiction with the appropriate European desk of matters relating to the European colonies in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific Ocean. The significant word in that statement is "concurrent". It meant that neither the European nor the Far Eastern Divisions had the power to act without the concurrence of the other so that whichever Division might be opposed to affirmative or innovative action could prevent such action; and in practice moreover it proved almost impossible to raise conflicting views for resolution at higher levels as we were directed to agree before consideration would be given to our recommendations.

Lawrence Salisbury was named chief of the new Division and on his resignation from the Department about two months later I was designated to succeed him and served in that capacity until July, 1947.

There had been many hopes and generalities uttered about the postwar world including not least the Atlantic Charter, and the colonial powers from time to time spoke vaguely of more self-government for their colonies after the war. As we considered the prewar nationalist movements in Southeast Asia and studied such reports as we then had from the area, we reached the conclusion that nationalist sentiment was becoming an important force in Southeast Asia. We felt that not only to accomplish self-government which traditional American policy has always favored, but also to capture the nationalist movements in behalf of the war effort our allies should be urged to be specific in what they proposed to do after the war. Our division prepared, therefore, a briefing paper for the President's use at the Second Quebec Conference in September, 1944, which was initialed by all the appropriate Divisions and Offices and was signed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, on September 8. I would like to quote from that memorandum as it appears in Mr. Hull's Memoirs because it states our government's goal at that time and because of its reference to trusteeships.

"In this [memorandum] we suggested the value of 'early, dramatic, and concerted announcements by the nations concerned making definite commitments as to the future of the regions of Southeast Asia'. We added:

" 'It would be especially helpful if such concerted announcements could include (1) specific dates when independence of complete (dominion) self-government will be accorded, (2) specific steps to be taken to develop native capacity for self-rule, and (3) a pledge of economic autonomy and equality of economic treatment toward other nations.

" 'Such announcements might well be accompanied by . . . a pledge to establish a regional commission. . . . The value of such concerted announcements would be still further enhanced if each of the colonial powers concerned would pledge a formal declaration of trusteeship under an international organization for the period of tutelage; but it might be unwise for the United States to attempt to insist upon such a declaration of trusteeship by one country if similar declarations could not be secured from the others. In addition to their great value as psychological warfare, such announcements would appear to be directly in line with American postwar interest.' "

So far as I know no effort was made to seek such concerted announcements presumably because of the implacable opposition of Mr. Churchill to the trusteeship principle and to any discussion of British territories. Yet as Mr. Hull explains,

"It might be thought that we were presumptuous in seeking to present our ideas to the British, French, and Dutch Governments as to what they should do with their own Pacific possessions. We had, however, two rights to take such action. One was the fact that the liberation of those possessions would not have been achieved—and possibly never could have been achieved—except by the United States forces. The other was our interest in seeing that peace in the Pacific, restored by our forces, should continue. And we could not help believing that the indefinite continuance of the British, Dutch, and French possessions in the Orient in a state of dependence provided a number of foci for future trouble and perhaps war. Permanent peace could not be assured unless these possessions were started on the road to independence, after the example of the Philippines. We believed that we were taking the long-range view, and that a lasting peace in the Pacific was of greater ultimate benefit to Britain, France, and the Netherlands—as well as to the whole world—than the possible immediate benefits of holding on to colonies."

While the European Divisions had installed the memorandum because, I believe, of its importance in psychological warfare, I did not feel that they were entirely happy with the more basic objective. From then on and as more and more information was received, one of our major tasks, during the whole time that I was with the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, was to try to convince the European Divisions of the mounting groundswell of nationalism which was engulfing all Southeast Asia and indeed, before I left the Division, Southern Asia as well.

Their concern, of course, focussed on our relations with the major European powers: rather naturally they tended to consider the colonial problems in Southeast Asia as of relatively minor importance. I well recall one senior officer asking me one day "Why are you concerning yourself with Indonesia; its only a Dutch colony?" There seemed to be little understanding of what was happening in Southeast Asia. Time and again the nationalist movements were characterized as simply the effect of Japanese propaganda. There was also, I felt, little concept of the effect on the people of Southeast Asia of seeing the Europeans driven from the area by the Japanese, and no thought seemed to be given to the effect of the massive, indeed total dislocation of the economic and social life of these people under the impact of the changes wrought by the war. We felt strongly that the colonial powers could not pick up where they had been forced to leave off or even with an allowance for four years of political development. We became convinced that during the four years of war nationalist sentiment had progressed faster and farther than it would have evolved during twenty or more years of peace.

As is well known President Roosevelt during 1943 and the first half of 1944 expressed frequently the view that Indochina should be taken from the French at the end of the war and placed under international trusteeship pending full independence. As late as February, 1944, the Department in a memorandum to the President proposed to proceed on the assumption that French armed forces would be employed to some extent in military operations to free Indochina from the Japanese, and that it would be desirable in the civil affairs administration of the country to employ French nationals having an intimate knowledge of the country. The President endorsed this memorandum simply and succinctly: "No French help in Indochina—country on trusteeship".

We in the Southeast Asia Division strongly favored the President's desire for Indochina and I hoped that he had some as yet secret plan by which he expected to effect such trusteeship for we were unable to see how it could be implemented without applying the same policy to the British and Dutch colonies in the area. I felt therefore that we should at least voice our reservation which I did in the memorandum sent to the President by Mr. Hull on September 8 from which I have quoted. Mr. Hull wrote in his Memoirs that the President warmly approved the ideas in the memorandum.

During the weeks following the Second Quebec Conference British support of a French return to Indochina became increasingly apparent. A large French military mission was attached to the South East Asia Command (SEAC) and the British SOE (corresponding to our OSS), who were actively engaged in undercover operations in Indochina, were ordered by the Foreign Office to devote their efforts solely to the French and to have nothing to do with Annamite or other native organizations. These and other facts were called to the President's attention in November together with an OSS statement that the British and Dutch had arrived at agreement regarding the future of Southeast Asia and were now about to bring the French into the picture. The President reacted sharply. American approval must not be given to any French military mission, he directed; all our people and also the British, Dutch, and French must understand that we expected to be consulted on the future of Indochina; and then the significant remark insofar as trusteeship was concerned: "We have made no final decisions on the future of Indochina".

The Conference at Yalta took place some weeks later. Shortly after the President's return I had lunch with Charles Taussig who was working on Caribbean matters for the President and was deeply concerned with colonial problems. He was to have breakfast with the President the next day and since we had heard nothing promised to inquire what if any decisions had been made with regard to Indochina. He reported that the President said that rather than international trusteeship for Indochina he had agreed that France might be the trustee. On April 3, however, the Secretary of State issued a statement with the President's approval that the United States, as a result of the Yalta talks, looked to trusteeship as a postwar arrangement only for territories taken from the enemy and such territories as might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship. As the French clearly had no intention of voluntarily placing Indochina under trusteeship, Mr. Stettinius' statement marked the public end of Mr. Roosevelt's earlier hope for a trusteeship for Indochina.

As the war approached its climax, the French, through the British, pressed harder for American help in the recovery of Indochina from the Japanese and for an active part in such operation, and also for a formal civil affairs agreement between the United States and France relating to the military administration to be established as the Japanese were driven out. As late as January, 1945, the President was adamant that he did not want the United States to be mixed up in any decisions affecting the future of Indochina; those were for postwar. And he did not want to get mixed up in any military effort to liberate Indochina from the Japanese. But the French did not give up. When in March Japan ousted the collaborationist regime in Indochina and took over direct control several thousand French troops briefly opposed the Japanese before crossing into China and the French asked for supplies and assistance from the 14th Air Force in China. Although the President disapproved the release of a statement suggested by the Department explaining that the United States would give such help as it could consistent with the operations and plans to which it was committed, the Department and the Joint Chiefs authorized the 14th Air Force, in aid of the French, to undertake operations against the Japanese in Indochina provided such action did not interfere with other planned operations.

During this period we had increasingly the impression that the European Office favored the outright return of Indochina to France and had little real concern about autonomy or self-rule or even of increased native participation in the government. An indication of this arose when a briefing memorandum should, we felt, be prepared for the President for the Yalta Conference. We knew we could not get concurrence in a statement about Indochina that would meet our views, so we circulated again the memorandum signed by Mr. Hull on September 8. This time the European Divisions declined to initial the document they had initiated less than six months before. No briefing paper concerning Southeast Asia accompanied the President to Yalta so far as I know.

The net result of all this was that as the war in Europe ended the Department had no agreed policy regarding the future of Indochina. The European Office and the Western Europe Division, confronted with the major problems relating to a hoped-for resurgence of France in Europe, believed that our relations with France were of paramount interest to the United States; that we should not risk jeopardizing them in any way over a French colony which in any event was no business of ours; and in all good faith thought it was not in our best interests even to press for reform in Indochina because it might embarrass our relations with the French. Indeed, a senior officer in the European Office told me some two years later when war between the French and Vietnamese had begun, that if he could have had his way American troops would have been used to restore the French to power in Indochina.

On the other hand, we in the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs felt that the United States had definite responsibilities with regard to Indochina. It was our military power that would liberate Indochina from Japan; the French in Indochina had collaborated with the Japanese; they had not even attempted to honor their protectorate responsibilities; there was a strong nationalist movement among the Vietnamese who had for centuries comprised a proud and independent country; and future peace and stability in the area depended, we felt, on a recognition of the natural aspirations of the peoples of the area. My personal hope was that the French would grant independence to the peoples of Indochina, but I did not feel we should carry our support of the Indochinese to the point of a break with our ally. France, weak as she then was, was still a stronger and more valuable ally to us than Indochina would be if we had to make a choice between the two and France which was striving to rebuild its strength and regain its soul needed our help, not a fracturing of relations. But I disagreed totally with the European Office in its opposition to putting pressure on the French to do what I felt was not only in our interest but also actually in the interest of France.

This conflict of viewpoints came to a head a week after President Roosevelt's death when a memorandum for President Truman was prepared in the European Office and sent to the Far Eastern Office for concurrence. As I recall the occasion I was handed a copy of this memorandum about 5 o'clock on a Friday afternoon with the request that our approval or comments be ready for a meeting of the top level Staff Committee the next morning at 11. We did succeed in having our comments and an alternative draft memorandum for the President ready next day but not in time for the meeting, and more than a month elapsed before in fact the Staff Committee considered the issue. Then Mr. Grew who was Acting Secretary in the absence of Mr. Stettinius in San Francisco told the group that he had two papers concerning Indochina, one from EUR, one from FE; that he had read both; and that he concurred in the paper from FE. He turned to Mr. William Phillips who was acting as head of the European Office for Mr. Dunn who was also in San Francisco and asked what he thought. Mr. Phillips replied that he had read both papers and that he too agreed with the Far Eastern Office memorandum. Mr. Grew then asked Mr. Phillips to arrange that one policy paper be prepared on which both the European Office and the Far Eastern Office would agree. I represented FE in the ensuing discussions and my friend, the late Samuel Reber, represented EUR.

Our first concern in the Southeast Asia Division had been that the EUR memorandum did not give the new President the background information which we thought rightfully he should have as to President Roosevelt's views or the recent history of Indochina.

Our second concern was that while we recognized that it would be contrary to American interests to break with France over the question of Indochinese independence, we were not prepared to accept as adequate statements about exerting influence in the direction of having the French liberalize their past policies. We could and we should, we believed, be very specific and actually use the power we had to try to secure self-government in Indochina. The French had indicated an intention to change their prewar policies towards Indochina even though their various statements, in our opinion, seemed inadequate to the situation and unlikely to assure peace and stability in the country. We felt their change in attitude had been due to a realization of the anti-French independence sentiment among the Indochinese who must be wooed if French administration was to be successful and secondly to uncertainty as to our attitude and a feeling that our support for the restoration of Indochina to France could be secured only by adoption of a more liberal policy. If we informed the French, as proposed in the EUR memorandum, that we would not oppose the return of Indochina we would negative our influence in securing French policies consonant with our interests. We wrote:

"Because the liberation of Indochina is, in fact, dependent on American defeat of Japan; because we are sacrificing blood and treasure to assure peace and stability in the Far East, postwar maintenance of which will be largely our responsibility; because without recognition of the dynamic trends towards self-government among the peoples of Asia there can be no peace and stability in the Far East and the peoples of Southeast Asia may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a pan-Asiatic movement against all western powers, FE believes that it would not be unreasonable for the United States to insist that the French give adequate assurances as to the implementing of policies in Indochina which we consider essential to assure peace and stability in the Far East.

We urge, therefore, that the policy of the United States should be not to oppose the restoration of Indochina to France, provided the French give adequate assurances as to the following:"

We then listed five points of which *a* and *d* are pertinent here.

"*a.* Development of a national or federal government to be run for and increasingly by the Indochinese themselves with no special privileges for French or other persons who are not inhabitants and citizens of Indochina so that within the foreseeable future Indochina can be fully self-governing and autonomous along democratic lines, except in matters of imperial concern in which Indochina should be a partner in the French Union.

* * * * * * *

d. Acceptance of a frontier between Indochina and Thailand, to be determined by an impartial, international commission."

The EUR viewpoint was expressed by Mr. Dunn who on reading our paper said he believed it would be better to let the matter drift rather than base United States policy on the FE version of the Indochina paper. He believed that we should draw close to Great Britain and France the two strongest western European countries; we should attempt to remove source of friction between France and the United States and try to allay her apprehensions that we were going to propose that territory be taken from her. "We should use our influence to improve the government of Indochina," he said, "but should not interfere." He wanted wholehearted cooperation with France and indicated that he share Bidault's fear for western civilization as a result of the dominance of Russia in Europe.

In our view pressures for specific reforms would not, of course, be liked by the French but they would not cause a break in our friendship or fundamental support. We felt that what we were seeking was actually in the French interest as well as our own: self-government would release the French from the heavy economic drain which Indochina had been for years to everyone but the Banque de l'Indochine; and with her long association with the Indochinese France would easily conserve her cultural influence and would clearly be a favored country in international economic relations. Admittedly, the inferiority complex from which France was suffering as a result of the war was turning French thoughts to dreams of a restored imperial glory rather than to more prosaic problems of substantive economic and practical power, but I thought this obstacle not so great as to preclude us from pressing for what seemed to us both right and sensible.

A practical illustration of what I had in mind was afforded some months later in our relations with France over Siam, previewed in point *d* above. In 1940 the Thai overran by military force substantial territory in Indochina. The Japanese forced the French to cede this territory to Thailand. It was the American position that territory seized with Japanese aid must be returned, but without prejudice to future territorial adjustments. These border lands had been a source of friction for years. They had been acquired by the French from Siam piecemeal, essentially at the point of a gun, during the heyday of colonial expansion. While fully legalized by treaties of cession the Siamese always felt that the lands taken by the French belonged to them. When France was weak they took back what they felt was their own.

I felt strongly that for future peace in the area the border should be adjusted and delimited if possible on its merits and not on legalistic arguments, and that this delimitation should be by some international group that would hear both sides and then make a decision that both would accept. I suggested informally by the French Minister in Washington that as part of or immediately upon agreement by Siam to return the territories the French agree to an examination of the border by an international tribunal. He was horrified; this reflected on

French honor; they might adjust an island here or there in a river channel, but they would not let an international tribunal suggest what the boundary of French territory should be. But I was quite sure that the Siamese would not return the territories unless they received some such assurance, so I kept pressing every so often. Each new suggestion was greeted with an "Impossible!" And then one year and a day later the French referred to my first suggestion and agreed to it; discussions got under way; a treaty was signed; the Siamese returned the territories; and an international Conciliation Commission was established. I might add that the Conciliation Commission upheld the French contentions regarding the border; but what I am trying to illustrate is that where there was something at stake that the French wanted it was possible to exert pressure and secure affirmative results without jeopardising relations. I have always felt the same could have been accomplished in greater or less degree with respect to Indochina.

The compromise paper that Sam Reber and I agreed upon was a sincere attempt to reach a policy on which all could agree as we both recognized that the Department could have only one policy toward Indochina, not two. Basically, we agreed that the President should be furnished pertinent facts which either EUR or FE thought important; but instead of conditioning non-opposition to the return of Indochina to France upon the receiving of assurance on five major points, we recommended that we approach the French, explain our interest and concern, and ask the French to give some positve indication of their intentions with respect to each of the five points. It was certainly my view that if we had the answers we would be in a much better position to determine future policy, and that this technique would alert the French to our interest but without threat or promise. I think it must have been a good compromise paper. My own staff were horrified that I had abandoned all we had struggled for; while Jimmy Dunn sent a scorching wire from San Francisco, writer Bill Phillips had forwarded the draft totally repudiating any part of the compromise. The suggested inquiry was never directed to the French.

A few weeks later Japan surrendered and the situation in Indochina changed rapidly. The Vietnamese tried to take over all Vietnamese territory and disarm the Japanese before the Allies should arrive in Indochina. They were successful in establishing a working administration in the two northern provinces of Tonkin and Annam, but factional dissension among various independence groups in Cochin China minimized the effectiveness of their administration in that province. Nevertheless for twenty days the Provisional Vietnam Government ruled all the territory inhabited by Vietnamese. Then the British placed the French back in power in the area they controlled south of the 16th parallel. In the north the Vietnamese remained in power by arrangement with the nationalist Chinese who were there to secure the disarming of the Japanese north of the 16th parallel.

With French forces back in Indochina and with all potential leverage gone, there was little that the United States could do to alter the outcome. We watched the negotiations between French and Vietnamese from the sidelines, encouraged when at times it seemed as if a liberal arrangement would be worked out, sorrowfully when both sides would breach agreements that had been made and when it gradually became apparent that as the French brought more military forces into the country their willingness to concede self-rule correspondingly decreased. I think both EUR and FE hoped that the French would reach an effective agreement with the Vietnam Provisional Government, but late in 1946 a concern about communist expansion began to be evident in the Department.

We are reaping today, in my opinion, and so are all Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians, the tragedy of our fixation on the theory of monolithic aggressive communism that began to develop at this time and to affect our objective analyses of certain problems. I have always been convinced that if the French had worked sincerely with Ho Chi Minh Vietnam would have evolved with a communist regime, but a regime that followed the interests of Vietnam first. There would have been no domination by China after China became communist and cooperation with the Soviet Union would have been primarily as an instrument to offset Chinese pressures.

I have never met an American, be he military, OSS, diplomat, or journalist, who had met Ho Chi Minh who did not reach the same belief: that Ho Chi Minh was first and foremost a Vietnamese nationalist. He was also a communist and believed that communism offered the best hope for the Vietnamese people.

But his loyalty was to his people. When I was in Indochina it was striking how the top echelon of competent French officials held almost unanimously the same view.

Actually there was no alternative to an agreement with Ho Chi Minh or to a crushing of the nationalist grounds well which my own observations convinced me could not be done. Any other government recognized by the French would of necessity be puppets of the French and incapable of holding the loyalty of the Vietnamese people.

As Department concern about the communist domination of the Vietnam Government became more apparent and more uncritical we began, I felt, to allow fears of such domination to overrule better judgment; we let the nationalist feelings of the country recede in importance and we ignored the father figure that Ho Chi Minh was becoming for most Vietnamese. The French seemed not adverse to taking advantage of our increasing preoccupation with communism.

A telegram from our able consul at Hanoi, James O'Sullivan, at the end of December offered some sound cautionary advice. He thought it "peculiar" that the French should only now become concerned about the communists in Hanoi. To his certain knowledge, they had known for years that Nguyen Ai Quoc and Ho Chi Minh were one and the same person and that he stood high in the Third International, and for over a year they had suspected that Ho Chi Minh might be receiving instructions from Moscow. He further thought it was "very peculiar" that French concern should be brought to the Department's attention at the very moment they were apparently beginning to shift their program in Tonkin and when they might be preparing to force the Vietnam Government to collaborate on French terms or to establish a puppet government in its place. "French concern over Communism," he concluded, "may well be devised to divert Department's attention from French policy in Indochina."

I always felt that we could see the situation in Southeast Asia more objectively than the British, the French, and the Dutch because we could, until the fear of communism affected objectivity, analyze problems without the handicap of self-interest, prejudice, pride, or domestic politics. I struggled to preserve Siam from excessive British pressures at the conclusion of the war and was convinced that we were serving not only the Siamese interest but also the British interest, a view they have, I believe, long since accepted. As to Indochina and the Netherlands East Indies I felt it essential that these countries be granted the political independence they longed for; that by making such a grant France, for instance, would in fact develop close ties with Vietnam because the Vietnamese had always great respect and liking for French culture and many, including Ho Chi Minh, would have liked to maintain warm ties with France and to have French advisers in posts where foreign expert help was needed. Voluntary elimination of hated foreign control would have permitted happy and mutually beneficial relations to develop between the two countries. This was in fact the policy France successfully followed later in West Africa, but the French people felt a deep affront to their pride at the thought of giving up any sovereignty or control over Indochina just as later they suffered similar imagined loss of face over Algeria.

I still believe that had the French been willing to grant independence to Vietnam in 1946 they could have worked out arrangements with the Vietnam Government that would have protected their cultural influence and left them with an obvious advantage over all other nations in economic dealings with Vietnam. It would have taken a greatness they did not then possess, and it would have taken a breadth of vision to see beyond the spiritual ashes from which they were rising, as Jean Monnet later had vision for Europe, but the failure to see their own true interest, misplaced ideas of prestige and glory, pressures from the Banque de l'Indochine; pressures from petty officials and those French who had settled in Indochina—not the best type of Frenchman generally, domestic politics, and the indecision arising from unstable governments at home—all these conspired to make the French intransigent at the time. Whether if the concern about the extension of a monolithic communism had not arisen at that particular moment of history the story would have ended differently I do not know.

I was away from Washington for nearly three months from November 1946 to February 1947 because soon after leaving Indochina at the end of December I was ordered to go to Canberra as Adviser to the American delegate to the South Pacific Conference. But my two months in Southeast Asia had confirmed, I felt, my earlier ideas and I was particularly heartsick at the outbreak of war between the French and Vietnamese.

On my return to the Department in mid-February I found that a telegram had been sent to Paris earlier that month in an effort to exert influence towards securing a settlement with the Vietnamese. That telegram had, however, spoken sharply against the danger of Ho Chi Minh's "direct Communist connection" and our opposition to seeing a colonial administration supplanted by an administration controlled by the Kremlin. This was impeccable theory with which one could not quarrel, but it was a prejudgment of the facts for which I could find no support. So far as I was aware no evidence to support the assumption of a direct tie to the Kremlin had ever been received and it completely disregarded Ho Chi Minh's intense nationalism.

The French presently indicated that they were seeking "true representatives" of the Vietnamese with whom they could negotiate. We were deeply concerned in my Division because we felt that would be futile and any resulting government would be a puppet of the French. We determined to make one final try and in a telegram that was sent on May 13, 1947, we spoke of the seven new nations that were in the process of achieving or struggling to achieve independence or autonomy in southern and southeastern Asia, and that in view of the great strides towards autonomy made by other people in this area it could be dangerous if the French-Vietnamese arrangements accorded less autonomy.

We said that we felt the best safeguard against communist control or anti-western, pan-asiatic tendencies would be close association between the newly autonomous peoples and the countries with which they had long been associated, but such association had to be voluntary if it was to be lasting and achieve positive results. A protraction of the situation then existing in Indochina could only destroy the basis for voluntary cooperation and leave a legacy of bitterness that would irrevocably alienate the Vietnamese from France and those values represented by France and other western democracies. We were inescapably concerned with the situation in the Far East generally and with those developments in Indochina which could have a profound effect on that situation. We hoped that the French would be generous in their attempt to find an early solution which, by recognizing the legitimate desires of the Vietnamese, would restore peace and deprive anti-democratic forces of a powerful weapon.

The earlier telegram had also accepted the French thesis that it was the Vietnamese who initiated the fighting between the two countries. It seemed to me important to redress somewhat the one-sided propaganda which the French had maintained and at least make clear the Vietnamese view of developments. For the information of our Ambassador, but with authority to repeat to the French if the occasion warranted, we said frankly that the French position that the fighting which began December 19 was the result of an initial Vietnamese attack seemed to us dangerously one-sided as it ignored Col. Debes' attack on Haiphong on November 23 and the "understandable Vietnamese contention that a stand had to be made at some point in view of the steady French encroachments after March 6 on the authority and territory of Vietnam," and we cited as examples the establishment of the Cochin Chinese Republic, the occupation of southern Annam and the Moi Plateau, and the Dalat plan for a French-dominated Federation to which Vietnam would be subservient.

Finally, we expressed our concern lest the French efforts to find "true representatives of Vietnam" with whom to negotiate might result in the creation of an impotent puppet government along the lines of the Cochin China regime or that restoration of Baodai might be attempted.

I have referred to this telegram at some length because it was the last action regarding Indochina with which I was associated, because it summarized reasonably well, I think, what we had long been saying within the Department, and because it reflected also my own observations in the field and the need to understand the Vietnamese view of developments as well as the French view.

As we had anticipated American "influence" in the situation was nil. Two months later I transferred from the Department to the American Mission for Aid to Greece where I was at first political advisor to Governor Griswold and later liasion between the civilian side of the Mission and General Van Fleet. I had no further responsibility in connection with Indochinese affairs or personal knowledge of subsequent developments.

The CHAIRMAN. I suspect you kept up with the developments pretty closely.

Mr. Moffat, your account and Mr. White's really leave me with a feeling of a kind of a Greek tragedy. After all your efforts, the report from Mr. White, we find ourselves in a situation that is so dangerous, and has already been so costly, that it is almost impossible to express my feelings about it. There is no point, I guess, in always thinking about what might have been. You have related, both of you, such significant aspects of how we became committed that I think it would be very valuable if we could get the attention of our government upon how we became committed, in order to better evaluate the wisdom of continuing to stay there.

CREATION OF PUPPET GOVERNMENT

Your reference to the French creating a puppet government—that is exactly what we have done. This is precisely what you were so afraid the French would do, and now we have done it.

I will proceed to some individual questions.

DEAN ACHESON'S ATTITUDE

You caught my interest in the end. You talked about the telegram. You said, "The telegram had, however, spoken sharply against the danger of Ho Chi Minh's 'direct Communist connection.' "

Was that telegram sent by Dean Acheson?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, Dean Acheson was Acting Secretary; his name is on every telegram. I don't know whether he saw it or not.

The CHAIRMAN. It is one that has been referred to in the Pentagon Papers, I believe, and it came out in the report of the subcommittee as illustrating his attitude. This rather dramatic change between the attitude of the Administrations of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, is it not fair to say that this represented the influence of Secretary Acheson? Your explanation of the relative influence of the Bureaus of European Affairs and Southeast Asian Affairs fits into that very clearly, I think. Secretary Acheson had been oriented, I guess, all his life very largely to the European theater and had been very close in many respects to negotiations with the British during the war.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT OF U.S. VIETNAM POLICY

Another thought occurred to me—this persistence of the British government's support for our policy in Vietnam is rather understandable when we see the very great responsibility they have for it, because that was a major influence, if I understand you correctly, during this period prohibiting or interfering with our following the policy that your agency, your division, recommended, was it not?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, they kept doing everything they could to put the French back into Indochina and they supported them wholeheartedly.

The CHAIRMAN. I didn't realize it when I heard Prime Minister Wilson make such a glowing eulogy of President Johnson's policy down at the White House one night; I didn't realize there was a background of guilt which he must have felt for having gotten us involved in this affair, so they still persist in it.

Mr. MOFFAT. They didn't get us involved.

The CHAIRMAN. They were a good obstacle to our following what you recommended, were they not?

Mr. MOFFAT. I think, in part, but I think the opposition of the European Office was just what I said, that they believed that our primary interest was to help build the French back and they considered that the colony was relatively unimportant and not really any of our business and the real interest from the American viewpoint was to strengthen the French.

The CHAIRMAN. They were against the liquidation of their own colonial empire or anyone else's because they thought theirs was going to be influenced by it; is that a fair statement?

Mr. MOFFAT. The British were, exactly.

The CHAIRMAN. So whatever influence they had, which was pretty great at that time, with the prestige of Churchill, was against the policy that you have announced President Roosevelt wished to follow with regard to Indochina?

Mr. MOFFAT. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that not correct?

Mr. MOFFAT. That is true.

ALLIES INFLUENCED U.S. JUDGMENT

The CHAIRMAN. So we have been had, as the slang goes, by our allies influencing our judgment. I can understand how that could happen. They were all experienced communities; we were relatively new in this area and it isn't just to blame people; it is to try to understand and at least to develop sufficient maturity on our own part that at the present time at least we ought to be able to profit by these mistakes and to follow our own policy; and I am frank to say I can't understand why we cannot.

This, taken together with Mr. White's very moving statement about Ho Chi Minh as an individual, and his attitude toward us and the world, really, it is just incredible that a great nation could be so misguided. And I must say, I still find it almost impossible to understand how we got ourselves off into this misguided venture, tragic venture, which is costing us so much.

FRENCH LEFT INDOCHINA TO U.S.

The French, of course, they finally, in their wisdom, were more realistic and they left Indochina and they left it to us. We stepped into their shoes, did we not?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, there was an interval there—I started in my first draft—to use that expression, but technically I believe there was—what was it. about 3 years after Dienbienphu, before we really moved in.

The CHAIRMAN. You mean physically?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. But philosophically and diplomatically we moved almost immediately after the conference in Geneva to create SEATO, with the obvious purpose, as it has turned out to be, to prevent the implementation of Geneva; is that correct?

Mr. Moffat. I don't feel I know enough about that period; I really don't.

I know I just didn't like SEATO.

The Chairman. That has been its effect, has it not?

I have seen mention of the British attitude but this almost continuous obsequiousness to American policy in Vietnam, I think, is explained pretty well by what you said here. Their Foreign Office having taken that view, I can feel they just have not quite been immune from that feeling of complicity in our policy there. Even with this latest escalation, and I have not read all the papers exhaustively, but I believe they are the only significant country that has approved the statement of 3 days ago. I don't believe any other European country of any consequence has approved it. Have you seen any notification of it?

Mr. Moffat. I have not seen it.

The Chairman. It is the only one, and I must say I don't think it is to their credit in view of their interest, their influence, in getting us involved.

CLASSIFICATION OF WITNESS' REPORTS

I would be very interested if the committee could have these reports, simply to complete the record of the committee on this earlier state while it is on our minds. I will initiate and really try to get your reports, if possible. I don't know why they should remain classified, do you, Mr. White, after all these years?

Mr. White. No, I don't, sir.

The Chairman. There is no reason. It would seem to me they would be important historical documents.

Mr. White. Incidentally, I would like to add——

The Chairman. What?

NO RESPONSE TO REPORTS

Mr. White. Perhaps it is relevant to add that those of us who were filing reports from the field, as we were always referred to, it was like dropping stones down a bottomless well. My files or my dispatches from Hanoi at the time were quite voluminous and, I felt, quite complete insofar as what I was doing, what I could see, what I could report, what I could analyze, what I could assess, what I could evaluate, and I never, other than to receive some instructions about logistics and food and travel and so on, I never really got any response to the substance of these reports at all, no reaction from higher headquarters, to report that the dispatches had reached the Department or if so what departments and, you know, it was really—we were way out at the end of the line.

Mr. Moffat. May I say that is an experience a great many of us have had. We had the same thing when we sent memoranda to the president. I never knew until I read Mr. Hull's statement in his memoirs, that he had ever seen the memorandum which I wrote on colonies and the desirability of trying to get specific commitments.

The Chairman. There was very little intercommunication. You would file them and that was that. You never knew whether they came to their attention.

Mr. White. In our case, OSS case, as intelligence officers, we learned to live with the central fact of intelligence life and that is that you specifically know as little about what anybody else was doing as your function will permit. So I didn't expect to get, you know, lavish inflow. But, for example, I was never told exactly why the OSS mission in Hanoi that I replaced had been withdrawn except I was advised that they had "exceeded authority."

WITHDRAWAL OF COLONEL GALLAGHER AND PATTI MISSION FROM HANOI

The Chairman. Was there a Colonel Gallagher in the mission that you replaced?

Mr. White. Colonel Gallagher was active in the area but he was never there at the time I was there.

The Chairman. But was he there at the time preceding you?

Mr. White. Yes, he had been there briefly and he had come back. He had been there with the mission that I replaced, which was called the Patti mission because it was headed by a Major Patti.

The Chairman. How large was the mission?

Mr. White. I really can't be very sure. They were—in fact, they left on the very aircraft that brought me in, my group, and it seemed to me as we passed each other there were 8 or 9 of them.

The Chairman. Eight or nine of them?

Mr. White. I could be wrong about that.

The Chairman. Is Colonel Gallagher still around? Do you know?

Mr. White. I can't tell you, sir.

The Chairman. Do you know?

How many were in your mission with you?

Mr. White. At the time in Hanoi?

The Chairman. Yes, while you were in Hanoi?

Mr. White. Just three of us.

The Chairman. Three of you?

Mr. White. Myself, a young cryptographer, and a radio operator.

The Chairman. I have run across something about references to the very cordial relations between Gallagher and Ho Chi Minh; is that not true?

Mr. White. Yes, that is true. It is in——

The Chairman. Is that what exceeded his authority—being friendly with Ho Chi Minh?

Mr. White. That could possibly be. As I say, it was not explained to me precisely why they were withdrawn.

The Chairman. You don't know?

Mr. White. But I do know the British and the French very seriously resented OSS activity insofar as they related to——

The Chairman. For the same reasons Mr. Moffat referred to: they just didn't want the Americans meddling, they were afraid we would be interested in the independence of Vietnam—is that your view?

Mr. White. That's right.

ASSASSINATION OF COLONEL DEWEY

The Chairman. You intimated—you did not state it, properly so: you could not prove it, that the assassination of Col. Dewey was left up in the air as if it wasn't unreasonable to believe it might have been inspired by the French?

Mr. WHITE. That is a conclusion that has been drawn.

The CHAIRMAN. That is a conclusion?

Mr. WHITE. But without any basis, any foundation, in evidence so far as I know.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Explain a little more in detail, who was Mr. Dewey?

Mr. WHITE. Colonel Dewey was a young—not so young—he was an OSS officer who took the original detachment of which I was part into Saigon.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Mr. WHITE. What precisely his authorization and instructions were from our higher headquarters vis-a-vis native, nationalist groups, I don't know. But he did see the prominent leaders of many groups, some clandestinely and some otherwise, in Saigon during that period.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you say he was identified with the nationalist elements among the Vietnamese?

Mr. WHITE. Well, certainly I can say this because it is a matter of record and it is a matter of my personal experience, that Colonel Dewey came from a terribly well-connected family in Illinois at the time.

The CHAIRMAN. Was he a relative to Congressman Dewey?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

Senator PERCY. Congressman Dewey—a son.

The CHAIRMAN. A son?

Mr. WHITE. Son; that's right.

The CHAIRMAN. Charles Dewey?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. I knew him. I didn't know there was a connection.

Mr. WHITE. His name was Peter Dewey but in my capacity as a liaison officer, General Gracey and General LeClerc very often told me how much they resented Dewey's activity in seeing nationalist leaders.

The CHAIRMAN. They didn't think much better of yourself either, did they?

Mr. WHITE. They didn't like any of us.

QUESTION OF COLONIAL POWER AGAINST ITS COLONY

The CHAIRMAN. This is a very sad, but I think a very significant thing, because of the emphasis that you and Mr. Moffat both put upon the nationalist character of the movement, as opposed to the alleged Communism. It is clear from both of you and was so clear to you and others that it is incredible that it did not impress our people more in view of our own history.

If we had been a great colonial power, I can see how we could be sympathetic with the British point of view; but this whole thing is one of the most mysterious aberrations that this country has ever engaged in. It is the only case I know of—maybe, Mr. Moffat, you, being a professional, know of any other cases in which this country has taken the position of the colonial power against its colony. Do you know of any other example in our whole history?

Mr. Moffat. I can't think of any right off the bat.

The Chairman. I can't think of any either. I don't know of any. All during this period, we did proceed later to encourage the Dutch to get out of Indonesia, did we not?

Mr. Moffat. Yes.

The Chairman. We certainly were accused of it. The Dutch resented it very much and the same in India and I think in Egypt and all around. Very often it is nothing but sympathy, by that I mean in many cases there is no tangible action, but our sympathies and our encouragements have always been in that connection.

There were one or two things——

WHETHER BANGLADESH WAS COLONY OF WEST PAKISTAN

Senator Percy. Mr. Chairman, if you wouldn't mind an interruption, I wonder how you would look upon our relationship with Pakistan and Bangladesh as to whether Bangladesh was really a colony and treated as a colony of West Pakistan? We certainly backed up and supported West Pakistan.

The Chairman. I don't consider, due to the very short life of this creation, creation as a result of war, that it was a colonial relationship. It certainly is not comparable to the British and French where one alien people have gone in by force and dominated another. It is my understanding that nation was created upon religious grounds; the division was an effor to divide the Moslems from the Hindus. Until yesterday, I never heard anyone suggest that it was a colonial relationship, but in that case we didn't do anything other than tilt the conversation. I don't think that is—at least in my view—it is not an example of an exemption to that rule, because I would not consider that a colonial relationship.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA

Would you explain, just explore, expand just a bit on President Roosevelt's memorandum. It says simply and succinctly, "No French help in Indochina—country on trusteeship." That is a very cryptic message. Could you expand that a bit, would you?

Mr. Moffat. There was "FDR" at the end of it.

The Chairman. What? Explain it.

Mr. Moffat. That is the extent of his message. He had apparently told the Secretary of State a good many times about his position on wanting trusteeship and when this paper came to him indicating that the Department would like to help the French get back, he just said "No French help in Indochina." It was endorsed in the upper lefthand corner of the document.

The Chairman. He thought that was the disposition of it—no help to the French?

Mr. Moffat. And then the Department sent a letter to the military, because this related to the military, you see, and just informed them of what the President said, adding that there was nothing to be done about implementing the trusteeship purpose at this time.

CHANGE IN FDR'S POLICY BY TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

The CHAIRMAN. One last question, at least before I yield to the Senator from Illinois.

What has been the very crux of the matter to me was this rather dramatic change between FDR's policy and that of the Truman Administration. Usually we think of a continuity in the bureaucracy, that the change of a President does not usually change the bureaucracy. We have a very remarkable continuation in policy between Johnson and Nixon, in my opinion, the way they view the world and the things they continue to aspire to, and I am not sure that it is very different from Kennedy. I think I could say that there was a greater similarity in many respects to the attitude of these three Administrations, and I assume the bureaucracy has much to do with it, but there seemed to be a very marked and sharp demarcation—and almost immediately—between the death of FDR and the accession to power of Truman. One of the most significant things is this: The Truman Doctrine was announced, I believe, about a year later than the period you mentioned here, was it not, in 1947?

Mr. MOFFAT. March 1947, I think.

The CHAIRMAN. March 1947?

Mr. MOFFAT. That is 2 years later.

The CHAIRMAN. Two years later?

Mr. MOFFAT. From the President's death.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you elaborate a bit on what you think happened there?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, sir, I don't think there was a change in the bureaucracy. I think the policy was there all along. We had been feeling this; there was the split inside the Department between those of us who were following Far Eastern Affairs and those who were on the European Affairs. Every so often, I think, efforts were made, while Mr. Roosevelt was in office to get him to approach more closely their point of view about the French and Indochina. These were rebuffed, as on this occasion, with this "No French help."

What happened was, on Roosevelt's death, the military were wanting certain decisions made apropos of the theaters. There had been certain arrangements made, as you know, between Chiang Kai-chek and Mountbatten, and although Indochina was theoretically in the China Theater and under American strategic responsibility, either side could go in and fight and they would then divide up the theater later on. Our military wanted some decisions made in connection with that. I don't know whether that had actually started before the President's death or not, but anyway, the proposal to get a policy statement emanated from that and the European Division then said, "Well, all right, let's see if we can get the same policy," that I think they wanted all the time——

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. MOFFAT (continuing). And they had been pushing it.

The thing that upset me so very seriously about this was their memorandum, which is in the Pentagon Papers. It didn't give Mr. Truman any background information as to what Roosevelt's policies had been, or why they were changing it, and I always thought that was what really aggrieved me so that I went to town on this one very strongly to get the background to the President.

The CHAIRMAN. They censored his information?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, you are supposed to send short memoranda, sir. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Then, if I can summarize, the European Division of the State Department had all along believed in this and your division and Roosevelt had been in opposition?

Upon his death the bureaucracy did assert itself and convinced Mr. Truman of it, is that a fair summary?

Mr. MOFFAT. I think it is a fair summary, sir.

We never sent a memo to the President; no memorandum went to the President; there was no policy paper.

The CHAIRMAN. To Truman?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I see.

Mr. MOFFAT. So it continued to "drift" until such time as the French were in there and then there was nothing for us to do.

The CHAIRMAN. The Senator from Illinois?

RUSSIAN STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS

Senator PERCY. I am sorry I did not hear Mr. White's testimony. I flew in from Chicago this morning, but I have had a chance to scan through Mr. Moffat's. I am going to resist the temptation to ask you for your reaction, for a while anyway, on the Russian statement that has been released in response to the President's actions, but—if you have not seen that statement—I can give you the summation of it very quickly, and I would very much appreciate your reaction to it.

OFFICIAL REACTION TO HO'S STATEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP FOR U.S.

But so that we may continue our historical inquiry, I would very much appreciate, Mr. Moffat, your reactions to and knowledge as to what might have been the response, the official response, of the United States Government when we did receive and learn of statements made by Ho as to his professed friendship for the United States—was there an official reaction ever?

Mr. MOFFAT. The position, and we were very sympathetic with Ho Chi Minh who was, in our opinion, perfectly clear—a letter addressed to the President of the United States cannot be answered without, in effect, I mean, other than from the head of another state, without actually involving recognition. We talked with him, we had all communications with him, but there was no answer ever sent to a formal inquiry addressed to the President of the United States, and I think if we had, that would have been taken by the French in that case as a really serious affront and possibly a breach of international etiquette.

Senator PERCY. Were his statements acknowledged to the extent that we possibly could, under international protocol, or were they also ignored simply because he was a Communist?

Mr. MOFFAT. It had nothing to do with his being a Communist. I wrote one of those memos saying we shouldn't answer this.

Senator PERCY. Our lack of official responses was well understood by him, simply because of his understanding of international protocol?

Mr. MOFFAT. I don't know what his reaction would be, but I assume that he would have understood that.

Senator PERCY. Mr. White——

Mr. MOFFAT. May I just on this point, which was made yesterday by Mr. Chomsky or somebody, that this was because he was a Communist—that wave of worrying about communism didn't take effect, didn't begin to become important, in the Department until the end of 1946, and all these communications had come in long before that.

OFFICIAL VIEW OF HO CHI MINH

Senator PERCY. Now, Mr. White, was there any official view taken by the OSS or any other governmental agency that you know of, of Ho Chi Minh?

Mr. WHITE. No, I don't believe we had an official view in that sense; our mission was to try to advise the departments, our headquarters, who was on first base in this particular part of the world, and what he was up to; and in that context it was clear that the party and the particular leader who was on first was certainly Ho Chi Minh. My instructions, for example, when I reached Hanoi were to seek out and report on the principal people. There was not any specific reference to Ho Chi Minh as such, but it is clear that the principal person, at least on that side of the fence, was Ho.

Senator PERCY. You heard Mr. Moffat's statement as to how he looked on Ho. Was he looked on as a Communist of any particular sort? Was he looked upon strictly as a Communist within the nationalists' particular framework or was he looked upon by the OSS as an agent of Moscow?

Mr. WHITE. Certainly not by those of us who were there, Mr. Percy. We looked at him as a leader of a party, the principal party and the principal leader. I had occasion to recount some conversations I had with him, and he never made any secret or attempted to downplay the fact that he was a Communist and had been a Communist, that he had been to Russia, that he had been interested in working for the Communist cause in many parts of the world and so forth, but when I talked to him he was taking a really quite matter-of-fact who is going to help me get this place running—you know.

DID HO CHI MINH PROVIDE SERVICES FOR U.S.?

Senator PERCY. Did he perform any services that you know of for the United States Government? Was he of any assistance, for instance, in connection with the rescuing of downed American fliers?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, he was. I asked him particularly about this because one of the functions we had in OSS was to attempt to locate people who had been particularly heroic in defense of American interests and people in that area during the Japanese occupation.

We had heard that Ho had indeed helped two American fliers, Navy pilots, reach safety in China, and according to the report we had at the time, which we had not had any way, really, to confirm, but it was that he had walked personally all the way from his mountainous retreat, hideaway, in northern Tonkin to Kunming, to the outskirts of Kunming, and delivered those two pilots over in effect to American authorities in Kunming; and he allowed that that was true, but before I could ask him for any details and get him to explain the length of the trip and so forth, he rather uncomfortably shifted the subject to something he was more particularly anxious to talk about, which was where could he get—

Senator PERCY. Could you give us the benefit of any conversation you might have had with OSS officers who had worked with the Viet Minh before you arrived, as to what Ho was really doing?

Was he fighting the Japanese or was he operating in just harassing operations and stockpiling resources to fight his own battles later; that is, for the postwar use?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, if I understand your question, I didn't have any debriefing from the operation I succeeded. The very limited conversations I had with the departing group was that Ho had in fact been very useful in, and very resistant to the Japanese—harassment was about the limit, harassment and provision of intelligence, was about the limit of his contribution. But there had been no lack of cooperation, or enthusiasm, on his part. The answer to your part whether he was laying some kind of infrastructure, laying some plans for later, I did not get that impression. I didn't get the impression that he was using resistance to the Japanese, as a ploy for bringing in power his own group. But I can't—I am not a terribly reliable witness on that point.

HO CHI MINH'S OUTLOOK ON CHINESE-VIETNAMESE RELATIONSHIPS

Senator PERCY. Did he ever comment to you on the long history of China's attempt to dominate Indochina?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, sir. You will find in this dispatch that that was very much on his mind when he discussed this with me. He gave me, in fact, a primer on Indochinese history or the history of the people, which is mainly one of resistance to the Chinese over a course of 800 years, and he gave that to me in great detail.

Senator PERCY. Did he comment to you or describe what his outlook would be on Chinese-Vietnamese relationships?

Mr. WHITE. In the sense, by inference certainly, he would resist all forms of Chinese domination of an independent Vietnam; that was their historical position and it was a very practical feeling he had this day which was exacerbated, as I said a little bit earlier, by the fact that his part of the world, the province of Tonkin and the northern part of Annam, that part north of the 16th parallel, were under Chinese occupation and the Chinese were looting the country very diligently. Here again it is the Chinese problem that was uppermost in his mind.

Mr. MOFFAT. Senator, could I say something about that?

Senator PERCY. Yes, Mr. Moffat.

Mr. MOFFAT. I think one of the problems we have in discussing the problems of this period is that China was nationalist at this time and the Communists did not come into China for another 3 years, but what a great many of us felt, and I have always felt, that the innate feeling and concern about China would have prevented domination by a Communist China of a Communist Vietnam just as the latter would oppose a Nationalist China.

Senator PERCY. Was there a feeling on your part that he was personnally prejudiced against the Chinese, and what was the depth of his feeling about them? How did he describe them and what might have been imbued in the existing leadership as a result of that indoctrination?

Mr. WHITE. In his discussions with me he would refer to the Chinese as "our traditional enemy." But he referred in a rather academic sense rather than in an emotional or an immediate sense. He sort of—"as you know, we have been resisting Chinese domination for 800 years" and then go on to tell me about some early Chinese emperor who had done something particularly offensive to the Indochinese pride.

Senator PERCY. Could you comment on the much discussed theory that if it is our objective to resist Chinese aggression in that area, that possibly one of the best ways to do it might have been to have a strong, unified Vietnam under some strong, powerful leader like Ho who was not a puppet of Peking? Ho looked upon China as a traditional enemy and Ho would resist with everything he could any invasion of that area or undue influence in that area by the Chinese.

Mr. WHITE. Yes, I agree with that, but I would like to put it the other way around, if you don't mind.

Senator PERCY. Rephrase it yourself.

Mr. WHITE. It is my opinion that if we had proceeded the other way in this tragic story and that there had been an independent but indeed Communist or Communist sympathizing Indochina, that it would not now be dominated or in any way influenced by Peking. The background of the relationships between the two countries would have seen to that, as well as Ho and the innate nationalism of the entire people.

WITNESS' ASSESSMENT OF DECEMBER 1946 MEETING WITH HO

Senator PERCY. Mr. Moffat, when you returned to the Department of State after your December 1946 meeting with Ho, what did you report and how was your assessment received?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, it was quite an interval. I didn't get back until the middle of February. I continued to send back diary letters which don't appear in the Committee study and in some of these I let myself go to members of my division in comments on Indochina, as the Department seemed to be getting much too much concerned on the Communist business and that it didn't—it was not justified in that part of the world. I did somehow—I read the telegrams and I still don't know how I managed to get that one of May 13 through the Department, but that was the last effort we were able to make.

FRENCH METHODS OF REACTIVATING CONTROL IN INDOCHINA

Senator PERCY. How would you characterize the French methods of reactivating their control in that part of the world, postwar? What methods, what techniques did they use?

Mr. WHITE. Which one of us, sir?

Senator PERCY. Well, Mr. Moffat first?

Mr. Moffat. I was trying to——

Senator Percy. I would like both of you to answer.

Mr. Moffat. I think Mr. White could give you really more on the ground operations.

The basic problem was that they did not want to stick by their March 6 agreement. As you know, the Chinese wouldn't pull out north when they were supposed to. There was a long delay, but then Ho Chi Minh did make the agreement that he would let the French send in forces peacefully, and the French made the agreement that Vietnam was to be recognized as a free state inside the French Union. I think people misunderstood, again talking international law, and think we could have recognized Vietnam at that time, but there was no question of foreign relations in the March 6 agreement; the Vietnamese were not given that power. That was to be subject to discussion. We couldn't have turned around and recognized "the free state" inside the Union at that stage under international law.

But the French were just encroaching and pulling back on each commitment they made. The Vietnamese were doing exactly the same thing. They were making attacks here and there. They were both breaching agreements.

The French were more successful, however, in making further and stronger moves and I would have said there was a piecemeal breakdown of what they had first agreed to as they got stronger militarily.

Now, I think Frank White can say more about the actual operations in the field.

Senator Percy. Mr. White?

Mr. White. Yes, sir, I can report how it was on the ground at the time.

I remember shortly after we arrived, General LeClerc arrived on the ship *Pasteur* in Saigon, I guess it was at the end of September, 1945—and he had a regiment of French troops but, of course, they were French Legionnaires and I doubt if there were half a dozen Frenchmen in the entire group. They were mainly Germans from POW camps. But, anyhow, General LeClerc made it very clear early on as he paraphrased the famous phrase of Winston Churchill, said: "I didn't come back to Indochina to give Indochina back to the Indochinese." His forces wherever they could reassert the French presence, did so and if it would require doing it in an aggressive, ruthless way, they did it.

On the other hand, I would leave the record incomplete and unclear if it weren't also stated that Viet Minh nationalists, later to become, you know, to be the precursors of the Viet Cong, committed excesses of their own. French civilians were brutalized on occasions, and this combination of excesses on both sides finally erupted into the war that was to come later. But it started—it followed the flag, as it were. Everyplace it went the excesses began and so forth however, the French did in the south manage to obtain and enforce a certain degree of control by the end of 1946.

COMPARISON OF VIET MINH AND FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Senator Percy. Specifically, could both of you compare the nature of the Viet Minh administration in the north of Indochina and that of the French in those areas they were bringing under their control?

What different techniques, approaches, procedures, methods did each of them use?

Mr. MOFFAT. I don't know that I could answer that question. I don't feel I am personally familiar.

Senator PERCY. Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Well, I can go this far and say when in areas the French assumed control they resorted to the familiar people and practices of the prewar regime. Many of the people, many of the bureaucracy, both native and French, were restored to the same kind of positions they had before. Now, in the areas that the Viet Minh controlled, we were not there to be able to observe any more than we were able to observe it in the Vietnamization program now.

SOVIET REPLY TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S SPEECH

Senator PERCY. Those are all the historical questions I have. Perhaps then I will turn to the Soviet reply today to President Nixon's speech.

You know how I feel about this war. I would say that this first reaction of the Soviet Government to the mining of North Vietnamese harbors gives some hope that a confrontation can be avoided, and that the summit conference will not be cancelled. The summit wasn't even mentioned in their reaction, and if this is true, then I would hope we could continue efforts to develop constructive relations with the Soviet Union, China and other world powers.

I think your own reaction would be most interesting and helpful to us. The Soviet statement reads as follows:

> The Soviet Government resolutely insists that the United States' steps to block the coast and disrupt ground communications of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam be cancelled without delay.
>
> The Government of the United States announced a new escalation of its aggressive actions in Vietnam, the actions that complicate further the situation in Southeast Asia and are fraught with serious consequences for international peace and security.

The statement said that Nixon gave an order for "mining the entries into the North Vietnamese ports so as to prevent ships from reaching the ports, for intensification of bombing of the DRV territory and, specifically, for hitting from the air railroads and other communications."

And I quote further from their statement:

> In this way, the United States tries to break the economic, trade and other relations that the DRV has developed with other states, to deprive the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of the opportunity to receive aid for its people to rebuff the U.S. aggression and also to receive foodstuffs and other supplies from (as received) the peaceful population.

The statement demanded that acts of U.S. aggression against the DRV be ended, that the right to freedom of international navigation and trade be respected. The Soviet Government expresses hope that this point of view is shared by the government and people of all peace-loving states.

The Russians said:

> No matter what false pretexts are used to cover up the adventurist actions of the United States armed forces in Vietnam, the real purpose of these actions is

> obvious: It is not to save the United States from humiliation but to save the notorious "Vietnamization" policy which suffers an obvious failure.

The Kremlin said:

> Intensification of the bombings of the DRV territory and Washington's attempts to establish singlehandedly its own rules of international navigation cannot but cause indignation and strong censure. These actions show again for the whole world the piratic nature of the war which the United States has unleased and continues against the Vietnamese people for many years.

The Soviets said the U.S. has signed the Geneva Convention and:

> The Soviet Union considers as inadmissible the U.S. actions which jeopardize the freedom of navigation and security of Soviet and other ships.
>
> The Soviet Union will draw from this appropriate conclusions that the Government of the United States will bear the entire responsibility for the possible consequences of its illegal actions.

The Russians warned the United States it is following "a dangerous and slippery road" and said that it can lead only to a new complication of the international situation.

REACTIONS TO SOVIET STATEMENT

Now, from your long experience with communications from the Soviet Union, and considering the situation that we face today, the reaction of each of you to that statement would be very much appreciated.

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, I read one other paragraph which bothers me even more and that is the next to the last paragraph which says—you have had the word "inadmissible" which I believe in the Diplomatic Corps is a strong word. Then it says, "The Soviet Government resolutely insists that the U.S. steps to block the coast be cancelled without delay." And that is awfully strong language in an international statement. I think they have left some things out but I think there is going to have to be some face-saving all around or else we may very easily get into a very serious confrontation.

Senator PERCY. Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, my offhand reaction to—I mean, not offhand but my instant reaction is that I am surprised that the Soviets did not take a more hostile sounding response than this one because I feel that the administration in each one of its major moves particularly in the last 10 days, but over the period of its concern in this affair has at each possible occasion taken another turn of the screw and at some juncture, I do think it is going to result in a rupturing relationship between ourselves and the Soviet Union and cause them to suffer seriously. I would not have been surprised if the summit had been called off.

Senator PERCY. I would have agreed with much of what you said.

Mr. WHITE. It still may be.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, those are all the questions I have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I have just seen this message and my first reaction is like yours. I think it is a very restrained statement under the circumstances and I hope it will continue to be restrained. That is going to be a very difficult subject for this morning. There are a few odds and ends I would like to explore before we adjourn.

FRENCH COLLABORATION WITH JAPANESE

Mr. Moffat, I think you said in your statement that the French collaborated with the Japanese which was news to me. Could you explain that a little further?

Mr. MOFFAT. They acted as hosts to the Japanese; they kept the administration in operation, officially French, but the Japanese ran the country and they just went along with it. There was nothing they could do but they went along in order to stay in power, I think, largely.

The CHAIRMAN. You mean while the Japanese——

Mr. MOFFAT. During the period of the Japanese, from the time the Japanese moved in until the——

The CHAIRMAN. What was that period, just for the record? I would like it.

Mr. MOFFAT. That would have been in 1941, December 1941.

The CHAIRMAN. Until when?

Mr. MOFFAT. Until March 1945.

The CHAIRMAN. Were the French nominally administering the country?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. But under the direction of the Japanese; is that the way it was?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir. Under the Decoux administration.

The CHAIRMAN. But the regular provincial administration was still French?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Although they were, of course, taking their orders from the Japanese?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir.

RECOGNITION OF TWO VIETNAMS

The CHAIRMAN. Tell me, Mr. Moffat, during your experience was there any recognition by the government there were two Vietnams?

Mr. MOFFAT. We always treated it as one.

The CHAIRMAN. Did anybody treat it as two, to your knowledge?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, in Cochin China the southern province, there were a whole series of nationalist factions there, and the Viet Minh or the Vietnam Government did not have the same control and they didn't have a chance to develop it before they were pushed out because that was in the area controlled by the British.

The CHAIRMAN. But prior to the intervention of foreigners, the French always considered it one country, did they not?

Mr. MOFFAT. No, Cochin China was set up as a colony, but Tonkin and Annam were protectorates which did not include sovereignty.

The CHAIRMAN. What was the distinction of that?

Mr. MOFFAT. We recognized the emperor, I mean the French recognized the emperor and protectorate and the French had a protectorate of those two states agreeing to take care of them and to prevent aggression against them, and that is why I said earlier they had not honored their own responsibilities.

ROLE OF BAO DAI

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned Bao Dai; just what was his role during——

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, he had a series of roles.

The CHAIRMAN. What was he prior to the war?

Mr. MOFFAT. He was emperor in Annam at Hue, and then when Ho Chi Minh set up and established a Vietnam Provisional Government, they persuaded Bao Dai that he had better back them so he threw his support behind them, otherwise he would have been thrown out; I guess he was actually eliminated for a time; and then later the French decided, with our encouragement, to select Bao Dai to head a puppet government, as the one person they could think of who could rally the non-Communist elements in Vietnam around him. So he came back as the ruler but he didn't last very long before he went back to the Riviera.

The CHAIRMAN. I am afraid I am not making it very clear.

Was Bao Dai just the emperor of just Annam, not Tonkin and Cochin China?

Mr. MOFFAT. Not Cochin China. Was Tonkin part of it? No, just Annam.

Mr. WHITE. Just Annam.

The CHAIRMAN. The capital of Annam is Hue?

Mr. WHITE. Hue.

The CHAIRMAN. What was in Tonkin at that time?

Mr. WHITE. Tonkin was an independent, was a protectorate as Mr. Moffat says.

The CHAIRMAN. Directly under a French government?

Mr. WHITE. That's right.

The CHAIRMAN. This palace you met at, you met with Ho, was old——

Mr. WHITE. That was the French residence or palace.

The CHAIRMAN. The French residence for the French representative.

VIETNAM REGARDED AS SINGLE POLITICAL ENTITY

Often we have talked about the section in the Geneva Accords which says the 17th parallel is not to be recognized as a political division or for any purpose other than for this regrouping.

Are you familiar with that?

Mr. WHITE. That is my recollection.

The CHAIRMAN. Which leaves the impression that they regard it, all of Vietnam, as a single political entity. Is that correct, Mr. Moffat?

Mr. MOFFAT. Well, except there was to be a plebiscite both in the north and in the south; and the original problem that Ho Chi Minh had, everybody recognized his complete control of the north, but the various factions and the French efforts to break the south away from them, they said we will have a plebiscite and this was one of the agreements which was not carried out. By that time, nobody trusted any vote anyway; it depended on who was controlling the election.

USE OF ELECTIONS

The CHAIRMAN. Had elections been used as a method of determining leadership other than at the village level?

Mr. MOFFAT. I don't think so.

The CHAIRMAN. They elected village chiefs just by the way one does in a New England town meeting, I suppose. Is that right? Is that your impression?

Mr. WHITE. That is my impression, yes. I could be wrong on this, but I am virtually certain that, for example, when he described himself to me as the Provisional President or the President of the Provisional Government of Tonkin, Ho had never stood for any election. He may have been elected by his own party members but there had been no plebiscite or any general election of any kind that established him as the president.

FRENCH BOMBARDMENT OF HAIPHONG

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. White, were you in Haiphong when the French bombarded Haiphong at sort of the beginning of the war?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, I was.

The CHAIRMAN. And killed, it is alleged, 6,000 Vietnamese? I have seen accounts that they killed 6,000.

Mr. WHITE. I believe that to be exaggerated. When I came in I was at a waterfront bistro at a time, as I recall——

The CHAIRMAN. At what?

Mr. WHITE. A waterfront cafe, bistro, sitting out there.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the date?

Mr. WHITE. It was in November of 1945.

Mr. MOFFAT. No.

Mr. WHITE. No, the French returned.

Mr. MOFFAT. That is why I think we were getting confused here. There were two of those episodes that I remember.

The CHAIRMAN. Two episodes?

Mr. MOFFAT. November 1946, was when Colonel Debes bombarded.

Mr. WHITE. That's right.

Mr. MOFFAT. That is a later one.

Mr. WHITE. I am referring when he first came back and brought this flotilla, and the battle cruiser *Richelieu*. They came in and they fired off a lively cannonade of big guns but whether the big guns actually—they didn't hit any part where I was near nor did I see any evidence of damage. I think it was a 14th of July salute.

The CHAIRMAN. It was largely a warning, I suppose?

Mr. WHITE. That's right.

The CHAIRMAN. Rather than the real bombardment. As long as we are on that subject, you were not there later when they really did kill a lot of people, is that right?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, I was there shortly after that.

The CHAIRMAN. Describe that. What happened?

Mr. MOFFAT. I am trying to go back now because this is after all, 25 years now, to get the details. The French brought up a fleet of boats and gave an ultimatum of 3 hours. I think the Vietnamese must agree to turn over the customs which were supposed to be Vietnamese or jointly administered to the French and set up a zone that the Vietnamese might not go into, part——

The CHAIRMAN. What is that day? I want to get it clear. When did this happen?

Mr. MOFFAT. In November 1946, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. 1946?

Mr. MOFFAT. I have always thought that this particular episode was what precipitated the decision of the Vietnamese to fight. There was no time, physically, to get an answer—I mean, to get the message of this ultimatum up to Hanoi and get a reply, and they asked for an extension and they promised to get off the message and get a decision from the government.

Instead, the bombardment took place as promised at the end of 3 hours, with the shells very carefully avoiding the Chinese sector but going into the Vietnamese section of town, and I was staying shortly after this with the American Consul at Hanoi and there was a Standard Oil man who shared the apartment with him. He had been down in Haiphong within 24 hours of the bombardment, so that I had not just Vietnamese propaganda but at least what I considered a fairly reliable, almost eye witness of it. I thought his estimate was about 2,000 killed. It might have been more.

The CHAIRMAN. It has been—I have read it— I don't remember whether it was Bernard Fall's book or David Schoenbrun in his lecture that estimated 6,000 Vietnamese were killed.

Mr. MOFFAT. My memory—it may be correct.

The CHAIRMAN. But it was an ultimatum directed at the Ho Chi Minh Government?

Mr. MOFFAT. It was an ultimatum directed at the—yes, Viet Minh Government.

The CHAIRMAN. They gave him no time to clear out?

Mr. MOFFAT. They gave the Vietnamese no time to carry out the agreement.

The CHAIRMAN. That is more arbitrary than we are; we gave them 3 days to clear out.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. They didn't have time in 3 hours; it was obvious they didn't expect them to; they just wanted to precipitate it.

POPULARITY OF HO CHI MINH

Mr. White or both of you, I have read—I think it is in Eisenhower's book, that if an election had been held at approximately this time, 1944, 1945, I think he is reported to have said that Ho Chi Minh would have received 80 percent of the popular vote.

Have you ever heard that statement?

Mr. MOFFAT. I heard that statement, I think, attributed to Mr. Eisenhower or was it to Mr. Dulles? Anyway, everybody recognized——

The CHAIRMAN. It was Eisenhower. I read it in the book myself, "The Mandate for Change." I was going to ask what you think of it. Was he really a popular figure?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think that was a reasonable estimate?

Mr. MOFFAT. Eighty or 75, I would certainly say yes.

The CHAIRMAN. He was very popular?

Mr. MOFFAT. If not it was the anti-French feeling and he symbolized it, so that even if they weren't for him, which many of them were because he had so symbolized the nationalist movement, they would have voted for him.

The CHAIRMAN. What was your feeling, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. I agree. I believe it would be something on that order of majority. To add to what Mr. Moffat has just said, which I agree with too, Ho was the only really recognizable political figure operating there at the time.

I don't—I am not suggesting that that was because he excluded opposition. He was curious. I have met many world leaders in my life before but he was the least sort of megalomaniac, if you will, of any that I have ever met. He actually abjured standing on balconies, you know, or popular appeals. When he went around he just walked around the streets as anybody did, you know, with no official cars, no pomp and panoply of any kind; but he was about the only recognizable person to vote for.

HO CHI MINH'S BACKGROUND

The CHAIRMAN. You make him—I thought, in your initial statement there—a very appealing figure. I mean, you said you were impressed by him. Then you said small in his stature; he was a very small man?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, tiny.

The CHAIRMAN. And quiet spoken?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, he suffered. He told me a little about his health. He suffered from—during the Japanese occupation he was living in the woods, in the jungle, and he had a bad case of tuberculosis, and as Mr.——

The CHAIRMAN. Tuberculosis?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, and Mr. Blum's report cites a group, an OSS group, which went in with a doctor and gave him some penicillin and so forth—not penicillin—sulpha drugs in those days, and he told me that he was fairly convinced that that was responsible for his recovery from tuberculosis.

The CHAIRMAN. You said he spoke English better than you did French. Had he visited America?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, he had.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he tell you anything about his experiences here?

Mr. WHITE. Well, I was involved in writing several cover stories on Ho in later days with Time magazine and Life, and although Ho himself didn't tell me much about his travels, other than to mention that he had been to the United States and he had seen——

The CHAIRMAN. Where had he been in the United States?

Mr. WHITE. All he mentioned was New York; he mentioned he had been to England and to Russia, and, of course, to France. And——

The CHAIRMAN. How did he get to New York, as a tourist?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, he was a—steward.

The CHAIRMAN. Steward on a boat?

Mr. White. Steward on a boat; yes, sir.

The Chairman. What kind of boat, do you know?

Mr. White. I think it was a French boat.

The Chairman. French boat. How long did he stay in New York?

Mr. White. I don't know. As we pieced this together from what reports we could obtain, not from Ho in Time, that is, Time magazine, he must have been in New York not a long time but I gathered 2 or 3 months.

The Chairman. Two or 3 months. Did he work in New York as a steward, I mean, as a waiter?

Mr. White. As a waiter?

The Chairman. As a waiter?

Mr. White. Yes.

The Chairman. Do you know where?

Mr. White. No, I can't—I can tell you some of the other places he was where he worked. He surfaced in Paris; he was not a waiter but a dishwasher in the Continental Hotel in Paris. He also worked as a photographer's assistant, developer and actually made some pictures. He was interested in photography.

The Chairman. Photography?

Mr. White. Yes.

The Chairman. Did he tell you about his visit to the Versailles conference?

Mr. White. No, he did not.

The Chairman. It is reported he was there.

Mr. White. It has been reported and that is all in the record someplace, but he just did not happen to mention it to me in our conversation.

The Chairman. Where did he learn English? How did he happen to learn English?

Mr. White. Well, this brief exposure in the United States helped, and——

The Chairman. He must have been a quick learner if he learned English in three months.

Mr. White. I believe so; I believe so.

HO CHI MINH

The Chairman. You said he was very curious?

Mr. White. Yes, that was one of the reasons I came away with not as much knowledge from my several hours with him, because I spent as much time answering questions as I did asking when I was with him.

The Chairman. Yes.

Mr. White. And, in his desire for information he was terribly eclectic. He wanted to know everything about everything.

The Chairman. Was he in London? Did you say he had been in London?

Mr. White. Pardon?

The Chairman. Did you say he had been in London, too?

Mr. White. I didn't say he had been in London.

The Chairman. I seem to have heard that he had been.

Mr. White. I think so, too, but I can't remember responding to that.

The CHAIRMAN. I think somebody said he worked in the Ritz Hotel in London, but I am not sure. Schoenbrun seemed to know him quite well.

Mr. WHITE. Yes. Dave knew him. As a young correspondent in Paris David Schoenbrun met Ho when Ho came to this famous Fontainbleu-Versailles conference to negotiate with the French.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, yes.

Mr. WHITE. And most of the other correspondents apparently in Paris were either too busy or too unaware or whatever, and didn't pay much attention to him; but David Schoenbrun did invite him to dinner and Ho showed up and they had a meal together and he saw him several times on that occasion.

MEETING WITH HO CHI MINH, DECEMBER, 1946

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Moffat, what was your impression of Ho? How did you react to him as an individual?

Mr. MOFFAT. I was tremendously impressed with him.

The CHAIRMAN. Describe it a little for the record. We are all ignorant and everybody is about him. We want to benefit by your experience. When did you meet him and tell us a little bit about what you did.

Mr. MOFFAT. I went to call on him.

The CHAIRMAN. What year? What time?

Mr. MOFFAT. In December 1946.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Mr. MOFFAT. It was a week before the fighting broke out and it was—I had asked for an appointment to meet him, and the report was that he was ill, and nobody knew whether it was a diplomatic illness or a bona fide illness. The next thing I knew, I was invited to come to the palace at 5:00 o'clock, I think it was, and I was trying to remember; I think there were one or two others present. Giam, not Giap. O'Sullivan, our consul, and Giam, would be the equivalent of Under Secretary in the Foreign Office. Ho was in bed.

The CHAIRMAN. He really was ill, you think?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, he was. He talked for about 15 or 20 minutes. I had no instructions; they had not come. We had discussed this meeting before I left Washington. The big problem was how far the Department was going to go on this anti-Communist angle which I was rather worried about, and so I had no instructions and I really couldn't say anything. I listened to what he said and I, of course, reported to the Department and then I also included it in a diary letter which I sent back to the office—my wife and the office—my wife was in the Department, too—and that is included in the committee print. But, frankly, I had a feeling just that I was in the presence of somebody who was great, and I don't know how you quite define it.

The CHAIRMAN. I know.

Mr. MOFFAT. But——

The CHAIRMAN. It doesn't happen too often.

Mr. MOFFAT. It does not happen too often.

The CHAIRMAN. That's right. Go ahead.

QUESTION REGARDING ALTERNATIVE TO HO

Mr. MOFFAT. Could I add one thing? When you were saying were there any alternatives. I think you probably are aware that there was a very big revolt against the French in 1930 and 1931, which finally became quite a large military operation before they were able to put it down; and there were nationalist leaders in that group. All except Ho, and I imagine Giap and a few others of the Communist group, all were captured and all were killed.

The result is when the next time came, and there was another smaller revolt in 1941, which was put down by the French—the Japanese stood aside and let them put it down—a great many more nationalist leaders were eliminated. The net result was that any potential rival, you might say, to Ho Chi Minh, had just been eliminated by the French and he was the one outstanding nationalist left.

The CHAIRMAN. The only one able to survive?

Mr. MOFFAT. Which is the reason that the Communists were able in Indochina to capture the nationalist movement which they did not in any other country in Southeast Asia.

DESCRIPTION OF HO CHI MINH

The CHAIRMAN. To return to Ho a bit, describe a bit—you said you felt you were in the presence of a great man—just for the record, I am very curious myself—describe a little more about him, your impressions about him. Did you have the same feeling of his great curiosity and his expectations of friendship for the United States? What did he say?

Mr. MOFFAT. He talked about the immediate—his desire for friendship with the United States and for help. It was just not that type of conversation where he talked around or be full of curiosity. He knew that I had come from the State Department. It seemed he was hoping that I would have some message for him and I was miserable not being able to say anything. His quietness was, I think, one of the things and I don't think it was a quietness of just being sick. I had a feeling of a quiet personality that was——

Mr. WHITE. Reflective.

HO'S LETTERS TO U.S. GOVERNMENT NOT ACKNOWLEDGED

The CHAIRMAN. The Pentagon Papers say that he addressed eight letters to the Government of the United States and they were never acknowledged. Do you know anything about that?

Mr. MOFFAT. Yes, sir; I explained to Senator Percy about that.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry.

Mr. MOFFAT. Letters to the President of the United States except from heads of state, certainly from somebody who is in opposition to the head of state of a friendly country, are not acknowledged because as a matter of policy, the President can't begin engaging in correspondence with people around the world; and that is just a matter of international etiquette. They don't get acknowledged. I think if we had, I think there would have been very, very severe repercussions—it would have been almost tantamount to recognition and that would have made—have meant a break with the French.

The Chairman. Have you ever seen the letters?

Mr. Moffat. Oh, yes.

The Chairman. What did they say? Can you summarize the type of things they said?

Mr. Moffat. Very much the same. Again, if I remember them, that he wanted American aid; he hoped for American support in their nationalist struggle. They varied, I think, as I recall. The one that is mentioned in the—in your study, in your committee print, is the one where he really wanted us to throw the French off the Far Eastern Commission, which was, of course, far more than just an appeal for help.

The Chairman. Yes.

GENERAL GIAP

Tell me, did you meet General Giap?

Mr. Moffat. Oh, yes, several times.

The Chairman. Could you give us a brief comment about him?

Mr. Moffat. My memory of Giap was that—and I noticed in my diary that he was the first of what I called the typical Commie—the cartoon Commie that I met; in other words, he was absolutely immobile as to face. He had no—I just couldn't get any reaction out of him at all. So I just didn't take to him very much. I just felt his sort of stoniness. On the other hand, I found a great many people who knew him, French and others, who really knew him—I met him only just at a cocktail party or reception or something, a couple of times—all liked him immensely. One reason that he was so very bitter in this fighting was that his wife had been killed by the French in one of the—at some stage—I don't remember the details but I know that he added a personal equation to his other feelings.

The Chairman. That is designed to do that.

Mr. White, did you meet Giap?

Mr. White. Yes. I thought he was the waiter.

[Laughter.]

He came and he stood quietly at one juncture when I was talking to Ho for a long time, and he was wearing sort of an open shirt and shorts which was not particularly unusual but it was sort of the garb that the houseboys often wore and it wasn't until later at some point in the conversation that Ho turned to him to clarify himself on a point, that I realized that he wasn't a waiter, but I found him—then subsequently I was to encounter him two or three times again and I rather agree with Mr. Moffat's appraisal, that he was not the outgoing type person that Ho was, and since he had some language problem we didn't find a way to converse easily——

The Chairman. He didn't speak English at all?

Mr. White. No, he didn't speak English at all and my recollection was that he was much more comfortable in Vietnamese or Annamite, as the language was called, then, than he was in French, so we just didn't get on.

DID THE CHINESE RELEASE HO CHI MINH FROM PRISON?

The CHAIRMAN. This is very interesting.

One other thing you reminded me of: I think I recall that Ho Chi Minh was in prison in China when, along in 1943 or 1944 and that we or someone inspired Chiang Kai-shek to release him in order to come down and advise our OSS; is that correct?

Does either one of you have any knowledge about that, that he had been in prison, the Chinese had caught him, I think, in Shanghai or somewhere and put him in prison, but we had something to do with having him released so he could come down and be of assistance in opposing the Japanese; is that a correct memory or not?

Mr. MOFFAT. I don't know, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know?

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Fulbright, that has been reported. We carried that in a dispatch or in a cover story at that time—done on him many years later, but the inference was there was no way we could really confirm it but that is one of the versions or one story that has been reported.

The CHAIRMAN. I know I read it somewhere and wondered whether you knew anything about it—he didn't mention that to you?

Mr. WHITE. No, he did not.

The CHAIRMAN. He didn't have anything favorable to say about the Chinese?

IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH OF HO CHI MINH'S SISTER

Mr. WHITE. No, he did not. But I must confess, he did not parade his personal situations at all. The only thing, the one he really mentioned in passing was the imprisonment and subsequent death of his sister; but he didn't dwell on that very much. He just said——

The CHAIRMAN. He took those things philosophically, apparently?

Mr. WHITE. At least that was the appearance.

The CHAIRMAN. Appeared to be——

Mr. WHITE. And it was, however, it was dedication to his sister that I heard people who knew him, you know, French people who had known him before, that was given as part of the reason why he never married.

The CHAIRMAN. He was imprisoned by whom? I mean, his sister was imprisoned by whom?

Mr. WHITE. By the French.

The CHAIRMAN. By the French?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And incarcerated in the cages?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. That is not designed to endear them, either. Mr. Blum says he researched this and that the Chinese did release Ho Chi Minh in order to enlist his assistance in opposing the Japanese in Tonkin; is that right? With Lu Han, I think.

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

PRESIDENT DIEM

The CHAIRMAN. There is one other character. Did either of you meet President Diem?

Mr. MOFFAT. No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. WHITE. No, sir; I didn't.

The CHAIRMAN. He came over here; he was in this country for a while. He had been a member of the French Provincial Government. Had he not been the governor of one of the provinces? I wondered if you could draw any comparison between Diem and Ho as individuals. But neither of you met Diem.

Mr. MOFFAT. No.

Mr. WHITE. I do know something as a student of the subject matter. He was a Maryknoll Brother, a lay brother, from the Catholic church. In fact, as I recall, another one of his brothers was Archbishop of Vietnam. I believe he did come up through the provincial administration but it would have been as a French functionary.

The CHAIRMAN. Back in the thirties, something like that?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

The CHAIRMAN. Anything else? This has been extremely interesting. I hate to impose on your time and keep you so late, but we don't often run across anyone who has firsthand information about these historical events. I think they are extremely important if this country is ever to sort out its ideas and its prejudices and its misconceptions and begin to think right about some of our relations. It is hard to get this kind of material or to present it. I am sure you have presented it in Life magazine, but under circumstances, I expect, which were not as ominous as they are today. It may be by bringing it out again that we could hopefully impress some people about and cause us to reflect upon our present policy as well as our past ones and our future ones.

You have been extremely kind to come here.

Do you have anything at all you would like to add?

Mr. MOFFAT. I would like to just make one comment, if I might, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I would welcome any.

ECONOMIC THEORY OF U.S. MOVEMENT INTO S.E. ASIA

Mr. MOFFAT. Yesterday there was a question, a discussion, on the economic theory of our movement into Southeast Asia, and a couple of clauses from one of my papers was read in support of that theory. You will note from one of those that I read today there is a reference to the Open Door policy or in equivalent language. I favored the Open Door policy in Indochina and in all of these countries, I think, just basically as part of the general, liberal policy that all of us had favored for many, many years, considering international trade as one of the big facets of peace. I don't think I ever thought in terms of seeking a place to put investments. I also felt that the Open Door policy would be very beneficial to the Vietnamese and to the people in those areas, who at that time were restricted very clearly to the French and had no opportunity to do trade with others.

The third thing: I was concerned about Southeast Asia economically because it was the source of two raw materials that were of great importance to us, and we wanted to be sure we would have the opportunity to get them. One was tin; the other which we now forget about in large part was natural rubber. At that stage, natural rubber was still vital.

Synthetic rubber was just beginning to come in and was still only at an experimental stage. I hoped our general policy would help break down the tin and rubber cartels which were a severe handicap to American imports of needed raw materials. Although I have heard of people who feel we should go into these areas in order to make it possible for American business to invest, certainly that was the last thing I think any of us were thinking about at that stage.

The CHAIRMAN. There was a difference of view between the witnesses yesterday on this point.

Mr. MOFFAT. I know there was, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. One gave great emphasis.

Mr. MOFFAT. I just want to say that was not the situation. The objectives I stated talking about the Open Door were there for the reasons I have given and no other.

The CHAIRMAN. That was certainly one point of view, and I suppose it is always an element in it, but I believe Professor Schlesinger thought it was much more complex than just being economics, even as the dominant motive.

Do you have any other comment you care to make, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. No, Mr. Chairman, I don't believe I do.

COMMENDATION OF WITNESSES

The CHAIRMAN. We are certainly indebted to both of you gentlemen for coming here. I know it is a great burden to you and few people like to come before any committee. We have difficulty in getting good witnesses, competent witnesses. You would be surprised how many former members of Government have declined to participate in these hearings, especially those intimately connected with these policies, so it is a great help to have you come. We are very much obliged to you.

Thank you very much. If you should have any comments that occur to you, we would welcome any comment; you can write us.

COMMENDATION OF STAFF WORK

Mr. WHITE. I would like to say I commend the committee on its staff work in its handling of this hearing and the reports that have gone forth.

The CHAIRMAN. I know the staff appreciates that and those of us who helped select them appreciate it. We don't have many compliments of that kind. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the chair.)

APPENDIX

THE ESSENTIAL DOMINO: AMERICAN POLITICS AND VIETNAM

By Leslie H. Gelb

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THE ESSENTIAL DOMINO: AMERICAN POLITICS AND VIETNAM

By Leslie H. Gelb

As Henry Kissinger has written, public support is "the acid test of a foreign policy." For a President to be successful in maintaining his nation's security he needs to believe, and others need to believe, that he has solid support at home. It was President Johnson's judgment that if the United States permitted the fall of Vietnam to communism, American politics would turn ugly and inward and the world would be a less safe place in which to live. Later, President Nixon would declare: "The right way out of Vietnam is crucial to our changing role in the world, and the peace in the world." In order to gain support for these judgments and the objectives in Vietnam which flowed from them, our Presidents have had to weave together the steel-of-war strategy with the strands of domestic politics.

Neither the Americans nor the Vietnamese communists had good odds for a traditional military victory in Vietnam. Given the mutual will to continue the war and self-imposed American restraint in the use of force, stalemate was the most likely outcome.

This common perception had a critical impact on the strategies of both sides. It meant that the "winner" would be the one whose will to persist gave out first. Hanoi's will, because of the nature of its government, society and economy, and because the North Vietnamese were fighting in and for their country, was firmer by far than Washington's. Washington's will, because of the vagaries of American politics and the widespread dislike of interminable and indeterminate Asian land wars, presented an inviting target. For both sides, then, U.S. domestic politics—public support and opposition to the war—was to be the key stress point.

American public opinion was the essential domino. Our leaders knew it. Hanoi's leaders knew it. Each geared its strategy—both the rhetoric and the conduct of the war—to this fact.

Hanoi adopted what seems to have been a two-pronged strategy to cause U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam by playing on American domestic politics. The first aim was to try to convince Americans that unless U.S. forces withdrew, the killing of Americans would never end. Hanoi's leaders seemed to have hoped that as the war dragged on, Americans would come to see a hopeless portrait of corrupt Saigon leadership and an ineffective South Vietnamese army. At the same time, Hanoi would seek to demonstrate a willingness to match force with force at ever-increasing levels. If the American public, or significant minorities of the public, could be convinced of these factors, continuation of the war by the U.S. leadership would become bad politics.

The second aim of Hanoi's strategy, as I imagine it, was to provide a face-saving exit for American leaders. It would not be enough—indeed, it might be dangerous from Hanoi's view—to leave official Washington in a situation where withdrawal could only mean defeat. That might lead to unlimited escalation of the war. American leaders had to be assured that withdrawal could take place without severe withdrawal symptoms. From time to time, Hanoi offered settlement packages that were not without appeal. These proposals, however, did not appeal to our leaders because they were not looking for a face-saving way out, but for a noncommunist South Vietnam.

Perhaps the surest sign that Hanoi's strategy made sense was that our own leaders also believed that American politics was the Achilles heel.

Officials rarely write memos with any explicit reference to domestic affairs, and seldom even talk about them except to friends and newspapermen off-the-record. The unfounded but nevertheless potent myth about politics stopping at the water's edge creates great pressure to keep one's mouth shut, to think and speak of foreign affairs as if it were something sacred. After all, foreign policy deals with the security of our nation, and this is no subject for narrow political advantage. President Truman once told a State Department official who dared to speak directly on the subject that he should not tell him about domestic problems, but about "what is right."

The public literature emanating from the inner circles is nearly silent on the connections between foreign policy and domestic politics. And officials are almost as wary of talking about domestic politics as they are of writing on the subject. We get glimpses of those few instances in odd ways. For example, the point of Kenneth O'Donnell's article in the August 7, 1970 issue of *Life* is to assure us that President Kennedy was waiting for the right moment to pull out of Vietnam. That right moment for

President Kennedy, O'Donnell declares, was after the 1964 presidential elections when the issue could no longer be used against him. Or, we hear from close associates of President Johnson that on a few occasions he would guardedly talk on the subject. Later, in his memoirs, he wrote:

> . . . I knew our people well enough to realize that if we walked away from Vietnam and let Southeast Asia fall, there would follow a divisive and destructive debate in our country. . . . A divisive debate about "who lost Vietnam" would be, in my judgment, even more destructive to our national life than the argument over China had been. . . . Our allies . . . throughout the world would conclude that our word was worth little or nothing . . . Moscow and Peking] could not resist the opportunity to expand their control into the vacuum of power. . . . With Moscow and Peking . . . moving forward, we would return to a world role to prevent their full takeover of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East—*after* they had committed themselves.

Few will deny that what our Presidents chose to do or chose not to do in Vietnam was very much tied to domestic politics. Yet, the myth is potent, and official silence on the subject prevails. Presidents suffer because the connections between foreign and domestic affairs, while talked about privately, are not treated in a systematic way. So far as one knows, critical assumptions about what will or will not garner popular support are left unchallenged. For example, nowhere in the executive branch of government did one feel free to do a paper which said "Here is how the right-wing could be contained if we accepted Hanoi's best offer." In this way the President is supposed to "keep his options open." As was the case in Vietnam, however, he may succeed in trapping himself. Another cost of this silence is that analysts trying to piece decisions back together for history are left without evidence.

Academicians and public-opinion experts have helped to perpetuate the myth in their own way by "demonstrating" that foreign policy simply is not a salient issue to the voter and that whatever the President says and does goes. Presidents have, I think, known better. Citizens may not single out national security affairs as the basis for their votes—although war and peace issues often are so mentioned—but the security area inevitably plays an important part in determining their overall impression of how the President is doing his job. Moreover, communications leaders and "élites" judge the President's performance with regard to national security, and the mood which they convey to the public affects public appraisals of the man in the White House.

II

On the surface, it seemed that our Presidents should have no special problems about U.S. goals in Vietnam. While no one presumed that Asian land wars were popular, there was evident general acceptance of U.S. worldwide security responsibilities among the public, press and Congress. And yet, problems did arise.

One problem grew out of how to talk publicly about U.S. goals without tying our hands in Saigon and in negotiations. In National Security Action Memorandum 52 of May 11, 1961, President Kennedy approved the objective of "prevent(ing) Communist domination of South Vietnam." In NSAM 288 of March 17, 1964, President Johnson's objective was defined as "an independent non-Communist South Vietnam." But our leaders did not choose to use this language when talking to the American people. Public statements of goals came closest to the private formulations in phrases like "stopping aggression." The classified language of the NSAMs was apparently deemed too negative and not in line with the American tradition. Something positive and more in keeping with American mythology was required, and so the public goals became "self-determination," "free elections," and "permitting the South Vietnamese freely to determine their own future."

As a practical matter, self-determination language tended to commit Washington to the existing Saigon government—perhaps to a greater extent than even those who backed that régime desired. Washington's representatives in Saigon made much of the necessity and virtue of holding elections. Elections, so Saigon's leaders were told, would help to sell the war to the American people. When Saigon's leaders obliged, held elections and predictably won them, Washington found itself confronted with a government that had become "legitimate." And this legitimacy conferred upon the winners increased bargaining strength. The Thieu and Ky power groups were thereby better able to resist pressures for reform. Legitimacy in American eyes also invested their régime with an enhanced voice in negotiations. As an ally, Saigon had the right to consultations. As a legitimate government, Saigon expected and received the right to approve the beginning of negotiations and the terms of settlement. As a consequence, attaining a settlement that did not ensure the perpetuation of the incumbent Saigon régime became highly improbable.

Although it must be said that many Washington policy-makers were not troubled by these problems, there were also many who both shared official aims and wanted reform and flexibility. These people found themselves without leverage.

A second problem was how to talk publicly about goals without unleashing pressures for the unlimited use of force. While the objective of a noncommunist South Vietnam was specific, our leaders did not want to employ maximum force to achieve it. President Johnson prohibited use of U.S. ground and air forces in Cambodia, ground forces in Laos, invasion of North Vietnam; he also restricted air power in the North. He did not want to risk a wider war and he sought to minimize civilian casualties. But unlimited ends, in time, are bound to lead to a call for unlimited means and the possibility always existed that popular frustration or passion would bring about irresistible demands to make means consistent with ends.

A third problem developed in 1966 as the ends of the war themselves came into question. From this point on, President Johnson was faced with a delicate choice. On the one hand, he could have chosen to wave the "bloody flag" and infuse the war with popular emotion. This, in the President's estimation, would have lit right-wing fires to win the war, thus eroding barriers against the all-out use of force. And once these barriers were torn down, so Lyndon Johnson apparently reasoned, right-wing demands could not be controlled. Such a strategy also would have been incompatible with the President's political style, which emphasized consensus above all. On the other hand, he could run parallel to this line by challenging his critics with innuendo and with the argument that fighting locally in Vietnam was preventing the outbreak of large-scale aggression elsewhere. President Johnson picked this course. Instead of insinuating that his critics were traitors or communists, he called them "nervous Nellies" and "prophets of gloom and doom." Instead of holding parades down Pennsylvania Avenue, he held award ceremonies in the Oval Office. As the war dragged on, however, none of this was sufficient to quell the growing opposition.

III

The fact that the war was dragging on related in part to the historical roots of the conflict in Vietnam and to the means which Presidents Kennedy and Johnson chose to fight it. Gradual escalation was the chosen strategy for fighting the war. This fitted in intellectually with the Kennedy-Johnson military doctrine of flexible and controlled response. In Vietnam, it meant a "slow squeeze" bombing policy for North Vietnam and an attrition policy for South Vietnam. Decisions about means, however, were based upon judgments about both the least risky way to fight the war and the best way to maintain public support at home.

The constraints which domestic politics imposed on the air war against the North were aimed at minimizing civilian casualties and the loss of pilots. This meant avoiding key population centers and other highly defended areas. Such constraints were reinforced by diplomatic judgments which sought to minimize the risk of confrontation with China and Russia. (All this, however, did not prevent the bombing of most fixed targets and the dropping of more explosive tonnage than in all World War II.) The strategic decision to bomb in a gradual but rising pattern (Rolling Thunder) rather than a simultaneous whole system campaign (the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS] eight-week plan) was probably made on diplomatic grounds.

It is also true that the bombing itself became a salient political issue as pressures to begin negotiations increased. While American right-wing and governmental leaders kept insisting on major concessions for stopping the bombing, doves argued that it should be stopped only in return for Hanoi's promise to begin talks. Whether and on what terms to stop the bombing emerged as the most symbolic political issue of the war in 1967 and 1968.

Domestic politics imposed a dominant constraint on the size and development of the ground war in the South as well. As many U.S. servicemen as possible could be sent to Vietnam as quickly as possible for short terms of service, subject only to a presidential prohibition against calling up the Reserves. In accordance with established military procedure, U.S. force posture was designed to expand by means of Active Reserve and National Guard call-ups. But to do so would be to disrupt lives of many American families. Because the President did not want to incur this political liability, he chose to deplete and weaken U.S. forces stationed in Europe and America and to increase draft calls. The burden fell on the young and the poor; for this and other reasons, political opposition to the war tended to congeal around these groups and their legislative allies. Not until March 1968 did the JCS and their political allies outside the government succeed in forcing the President's hand on the Reserve issue, and then he acceded only to a 25,000-man call-up.

If, after 1965, force decisions called for the *maximum* possible, given domestic and diplomatic constraints, domestic politics dictated the *minimum* necessary disruption of American life. This was the case not only with respect to Reserve call-ups, but with respect to the economics of the war. President Johnson wanted guns and butter. He did not inform his chief economic advisers of the fall 1965 decision to achieve a force level of 175,000 men. He resisted pressures for increased taxes throughout 1966. Finally, in late 1967, he asked for a ten percent surtax, but this fell far short of paying for the mounting costs of the war. Moreover, he refused to let congressional leaders call it a war tax. Short-run prosperity was purchased at the price of long-run inflation.

Domestic politics also impelled the leaders of the Johnson administration to become fire-fighters. Actions in Vietnam, if not dictated, were often shaped by daily criticisms at home. The many false starts on the pacification program came in response to charges by legislators and journalists that Johnson was not doing enough about "the other war." If legislators insisted that Saigon's forces do more of the fighting, willy-nilly, the size of those forces was increased. No matter that the issue was quality, not size. Size could be fixed faster. And so it was with many other issues as the Administration sought vainly to paper over critical television reports and front-page news stories with short-run solutions.

But short-term fixes and a policy of not demanding domestic sacrifices were not enough. The President also had to manipulate time horizons carefully. Just as Hanoi tried to portray the war as never-ending, Washington had to feed the impression of near-term winnability. The public would not stand for gradualism if it promised only open-ended fighting with continued U.S. fatalities. Thus was born the policy of controlled optimism. Pressure from the White House was felt throughout the government, into the field, down to the very bottom of the command structure. Show progress politically and militarily! Visitors to the Oval Office would be treated to a look at President Johnson pulling Ambassador Lodge's or Ambassador Bunker's "weekly nodis" cable out of his inside jacket pocket and hearing how things were getting better. Pointed questions about when the war would end were side-stepped if possible. Only if answers had to be provided would the truth be admitted. (Fortunately for Administration strategy, the news media made little of these isolated revelations.) Admitting to the public that the war would take time, officials seemed to have reasoned, would play into Hanoi's hands. So, whenever possible, the Administration assured the public of ultimate success. Some officials were allowed to climb out on a limb and predict imminent victory. Others volunteered their genuine optimism. The net effect was to lead the public to think that the end was near. But the dilemma of this strategy could not have been lost on our leaders. Optimism without results would only work for so long; after that, it would produce the credibility gap.

IV

Behind the fall into the credibility gap and beyond the President's domestic strategy, there resided a vital and unquestioned assumption—that America was basically hawkish and that the forces of conservatism, if not reaction, would always prevail over the liberal groups. This assumption probably underpinned President Kennedy's remarks to Kenneth O'Donnell and Senator Mansfield in 1963 that he was waiting until after the next election before changing direction in Vietnam. In the ensuing years, President Johnson occasionally lectured reporters and his own aides on the politics of the war. He is supposed to have told them that they were worrying about the wrong domestic opposition. They were worrying, so the stories ran, about the liberals and the doves, but the real problem was the conservatives. They had "done in" President Truman over China. They still held the reins of power in the congressional committees. They were the difference between the success and failure of Great Society legislation. And waiting in the wings was latent right-wing McCarthyism, threatening to strike at all that liberals held dear if a President of the United States ever lost a war. Although none of these stories can be taken at face value, the point is there—the nation, in the opinion of our leaders, would not tolerate the loss of a "free" country to communism.

Were Presidents Kennedy and Johnson correct in their estimation of American politics as essentially conservative? Was the strategy of gradualism consistent with these assumptions? And was this strategy the best way of convincing Hanoi that they had the public support necessary to stay the course in Vietnam?

The evidence on the first question is mixed. For the assumption that U.S. politics were essentially conservative, we have the facts that: professional politicians widely held this view; conservatives did influence the Congress disproportionately to their numbers; President Truman did suffer because of China and Korea; public opinion polls from 1954 until a year ago did show a majority of Americans against losing South Vietnam to communism. Against this assumption, we have the facts that: the alternatives in many of the Vietnam polls (unilateral withdrawal or annihilation of the enemy) gave the respondent little choice; other polls showed a majority against losing to communism, but also showed a majority against using U.S. forces to accomplish this; polls on foreign affairs strongly tend to follow the presidential lead; the President's overall popularity was dropping in the polls; and the majority of Americans eventually did turn against the war, or at least against fighting at any sizable cost in lives and dollars.

Perhaps the answer is that our Presidents were right about the conservative thrust of American politics until March 1968, and that it took the experience of the Vietnam War to deflate public passions about losing countries to communism.

The answer to the second question—did the strategy of gradualism fit the assumption of hawkishness?—is yes, but more than that as well. On the surface, the strategy was directed toward the right wing. As the war went on, gradualism did become the functional equivalent of escalation. And escalation, in turn, was supposed to meet not only the increasing military needs in the field, but appease the hawks at home as well. Yet, the right wing was not satisfied. They always wanted much more than Johnson would give. And the President must have known that this would be the case, for his strategy was much more complex than a simple effort to placate the Right.

On a deeper level, gradualism was designed to control both the Right and the Left. With respect to the management of the domestic aspects of the war, it rested implicitly on the belief that asking the public to swallow the war whole would backfire, leading to irresistible pressures either to win or get out. It was the product of the old consensus game. The key was to stake out the middle ground. Everyone was to be given the illusion that the war would soon be over. The Right was to be given escalation. The Left was to be given occasional peace overtures. The middle would not be asked to pay for the war. The Right would be assured that South Vietnam would not be lost. The Left would be frightened into submission by the specter of McCarthyism. But the key to the whole strategy was phasing.

The right-wing reaction was the ultimate nightmare. This was to be forestalled and the hawks controlled by not losing, by escalating and by promising victory. But given these parameters the immediate problem was to keep the doves, the liberals and the Left in line.

In the short run, President Johnson was more wary of the Left than of the Right. The McCarthyite nightmare might come to pass if the United States lost Vietnam. But it could happen only if the doves and the Left first gained the ascendancy, only if their opposition to the war spread to the middle and across to the Right. The Left and the liberals were the only ones who would openly press for withdrawal, for "losing." The Right would be unhappy, disgruntled, but they would never press the case for withdrawal to the public. The Left and the doves would—and, to a large extent, they prevailed.

V

All this raises the final question—was the President's strategy the best way of making Hanoi believe that U.S. Presidents would be able to continue the war until North Vietnam quit? My guess is that Hanoi's leaders not only were confident they could outlast gradualism in the field, but also were aware that such a strategy was a sign of the domestic political weakness of our Presidents.

The "slow-squeeze" approach showed Hanoi two things. On the one hand, it signaled that America could always do more militarily, while on the other, it revealed that the President would not do all that was necessary to win. A step-by-step strategy of threat can spring either from conviction or endemic weakness. U.S. policy toward Vietnam sprang from both. Manipulation by force or "compellence" had great appeal as a war strategy. But with each passing year of war the domestic political position of the President grew weaker.

Over time, the use of threats could not hide the President's fear that the fulfillment of his threats would be as costly to the United States as to North Vietnam. Going all-out to win apparently presented President Johnson with a double nightmare. If the public went along, it might portend war with China or Russia and a garrison state at home. If the public balked and wanted to "bug out," a McCarthyite reaction might ensue. And yet, going less than all-out would not be enough to win militarily—at least for many years. Only by accepting the risks of using maximum force and only by asking for domestic sacrifices could President Johnson have convinced Hanoi that the United States had crossed the threshold from a policy of questionable persistence to a war of no return, and that the American commitment to the war was irrevocable.

Thus, President Johnson's dilemma was stark. He would not try maximum force to win, because that would risk World War III. He would not replay Vietnam as China 1949, lose it and take the case to the public, because that would risk another round of McCarthyism. He would, as a last resort, replay Vietnam as Korea, hoping to outlast the other side and getting them to agree to stay on their side of the line—and risk wearing down his nation and countrymen.

President Johnson could look back at the Korean War and think it was bad, but not as bad as losing China. Harry Truman was roundly attacked for his self-restraint in fighting the Korean War—and yet, most Americans saw it as a courageous decision, *and* the history books were filled with praise for the beleagured President. China ruined President Truman. That is, it ruined him politically at that time—and its "loss" did ignite McCarthyism. But in the perspective of those very same history books, President Truman's decision to back away from the corrupt régime of Chiang and accept the tide of Mao was hailed as his most courageous and wisest hour. Lyndon Johnson did not see it that way. He would continue with middle-course actions in Vietnam, playing off Left and Right against one another at home. This strategy satisfied neither hawks nor doves; nor did it face down the North Vietnamese. The costs were staggering and are still incalculable—as are the costs of what might have been had the United States withdrawn or gone "all-out." And yet, President Johnson played his hand well enough to prevent the essential domino from falling and to persist in his policy.

VI

On January 25, 1972, President Nixon publicly revealed two peace proposals which Henry Kissinger had made secretly to Hanoi. One proposal dealt with an overall settlement, including free elections "run by an independent body representing all political forces in South Vietnam," with international supervision, and with President Thieu stepping down from office prior to the vote. The second proposal, a military settlement carved out from the overall settlement, offered "a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of all U.S. forces and other foreign forces . . . within six months" provided that Hanoi agree to a phased return of U.S. prisoners of war and an Indochina-wide ceasefire "implement(ing) the principle that all armed forces of the countries of Indochina must remain within their national frontiers." Certain ambiguities in these proposals with respect to the powers of the electoral commission, the timing of the mutual withdrawal, future U.S. military aid to Saigon, and the phasing of a settlement, could indicate a new American flexibility. Still, the President did make clear that Hanoi had ignored and, in effect, had found both packages unacceptable. Hanoi has long opposed both elections controlled by other than a coalition government and a ceasefire-mutual withdrawal as too risky for its supporters in South Vietnam. Yet, Americans were bound to see the President's offers as reasonable, as a fair compromise. The President did manage to quiet Vietnam critics.

But the history of popular and political reaction to presidential peace overtures is filled with peaks and valleys. Both Johnson and Nixon have been able to gain renewed support in the short run only to lose it as their proposals proved non-negotiable and as the realities of the war again reassert themselves. As American troop levels decline, U.S. bargaining power evaporates. While a good case can be made that either of the "new" offers are in Hanoi's interest to accept, Hanoi seems likely to continue to reject them. Their aim appears to be not only withdrawal of the direct U.S. military presence, but the cessation of all military assistance to the Saigon régime, including naval and air support from beyond Indochina itself. At this time, the odds are they will settle for nothing less. The war will go on. And because the politics of the war are so fragile, it still behooves us to take a closer look at where we stand on Vietnam in America.

President Nixon has defined the U.S. objective in Vietnam in the same overall terms as did President Johnson. In his February 25, 1971, "Foreign Policy Report," President Nixon affirmed that with respect to both negotiations and Vietnamization, "We seek the opportunity for the South Vietnamese people to determine their own political future without outside interference." With the invasion of Laos and with ever-receding possibilities for a negotiated settlement, the goal of Vietnamization was clarified to mean "providing a reasonable chance for the South Vietnamese to defend themselves." Some were led to believe that this meant American forces would be totally withdrawn with the President hoping for a "decent interval" to elapse after that full withdrawal and before a communist takeover, so that our responsibility for the collapse of the Saigon government would be diminished. Others interpreted it as merely an indication that we are progressively turning over the fighting to the Saigon government. Still others saw it as the old objective of "an independent noncommunist South Vietnam" and as a way of preserving the Thieu régime. Dressed in new, moderate words because the war itself is being deeply questioned, the Nixon goal has occasioned more controversy than President Johnson's. But it has also afforded the President the flexibility necessary for troop reductions.

By May 1972, the U.S. troop ceiling in Vietnam will be 69,000 men. And the President has promised another troop withdrawal announcement before that time. If Hanoi continues to reject the Nixon peace proposals, Vietnamization will result in the maintenance of two American residual forces as long as is necessary: one in Vietnam providing essentially logistical support, and the other (not counted as part of the force ceiling) in Thailand and on carriers off the Vietnamese shore providing air power. It certainly includes continuing economic and military assistance to Saigon at close to $2 billion per year as well.

The Vietnamization policy has produced a different domestic political problem than President Johnson's policy of escalation. For President Johnson, the problem was how many troops could be put into Vietnam and profitably employed despite tenuous domestic support. For President Nixon, the problem has been how few troops can be withdrawn while maintaining a military balance in Vietnam but still assuaging the growing domestic opposition.

The issue for both Presidents was how to balance military risks in the field with conflicting political risks at home. President Johnson, who was not faced with serious domestic opposition to the war until March 1968, took few risks with the situation in Vietnam. After opinion turned against the war, President Johnson paid for this earlier decision with the loss of political strength. President Nixon has been assuming risks on both scales. He has taken chances with popular support by ordering the invasions of Cambodia and Laos and the "protective reaction" bombing strikes against North Vietnam. But he has also run risks in South Vietnam by reducing forces faster than the U.S. military deemed safe. The combination of moves has led to a reduction in American deaths and casualties (from over 500 per week in 1968 to about 50 per week at the beginning of 1972) and costs (from about $25 billion in 1968 to about $7 billion for 1972). The military situation has remained stable in Vietnam. For the President's purposes, his strategy has been an apparent success at home and in Vietnam—at least in the wake of his January 25th speech.

On one level, President Nixon seems to have succeeded in neutralizing Vietnam as a prime issue in the forthcoming November election. As Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird said in a television interview: "The American people understand the difference between addition and subtraction." U.S. troops have been withdrawn from Vietnam on schedule and even ahead of the schedule of presidential announcements. The winding down of the war and the steep drop in American casualties, according to this view, have defused the opposition.

VII

Political pundits have observed what was there for all of us to see—the general subsiding of active criticism of the President's Vietnam policy. Such criticism no longer dominated the news media in the week preceding Nixon's China visit. Because they seemed to illustrate the consequences of the President's policy, the invasion of Cambodia and the subsequent tragedy at Kent State in 1970 probably represented the high point of opposition. But a curious phenomenon developed thereafter. While opposition to the war widened throughout the United States, the group of active critics seemingly narrowed to the political Left. More Americans were against the war, but fewer were doing anything about their beliefs. President Nixon reaped another political benefit from Cambodia—it defused right-wing criticism of war policy. Conservatives seemed gratified that this sanctuary finally had been invaded and pleased by the subsequent U.S. troop reductions. Unlike Johnson, Nixon did not have to worry about his right flank from this point on.

While questioning of the war by Congressmen and Senators became more widespread, and while amendments were passed which placed limits on U.S. involvement in Cambodia and Laos, the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment to set a deadline for withdrawal of all American forces failed by a larger vote in 1971 than in 1970. The political thrust of congressional opposition did not succeed in compelling the President to accept total withdrawal by a certain date in exchange for POWs only, but it did succeed in making escalation of the war more improbable and in hastening troop reductions. In other words, congressional opposition to the war increased, but legislators still showed themselves ready to follow the President's lead as long as U.S. troops were being withdrawn, U.S. casualties were being reduced and as long as it looked as if Vietnamization was working.

On a different level, however, Vietnam seems to remain a major political issue. An October 1971 Gallup report ranked Vietnam right behind economic problems and well ahead of crime, race, poverty and other matters on the list of "the most important problems facing this country today." One Harris poll showed that a majority of the American people believed that the war in Vietnam was immoral. A February 1971 Gallup poll found that 61 percent believed that the war was a mistake while only 28 percent felt that it was not. More revealing are the responses in Gallup's August 1971 report where it was asked: "Suppose one candidate for Congress . . . said that he favors getting *all* U.S. armed forces out of Vietnam by July 1 of next year, and he is opposed by a candidate who says we must leave about 50,000 troops there to help the South Vietnamese. Other things being equal, which candidate would you prefer?" Sixty-one percent favored complete withdrawl, while 28 percent wanted to leave troops and 11 percent had no opinion. More importantly for President Nixon, Gallup claimed in his June 1971 report that the President faces a "giant-size credibility gap on Vietnam." In response to the question: "Do you think that the Nixon administration is or is not telling the public all they should know about the Vietnam war?," 24 percent said "is" and 67 percent said "is not." And despite the President's promises to end the war, 51 percent of the respondents believed that the war will last two years or more, or never end. At bottom, President Nixon's credibility gap has the same sources as President Johnson's—promises of an end to a war that does not end.

The results of these polls notwithstanding, critics of the war themselves seem to believe that the President has captured the electoral high ground. Most of these critics have switched the terms of their attack from arguing that the President's policy will not work to arguing that it is immoral and will only perpetuate the war and the consequences of the war. This tacit concession to the progress of Vietnamization and to the political success of the President's latest peace proposal at once evokes the true feelings of the critics and their political weakness. Their moral argument assumes a strong public interest in Vietnam, but in reality it seems to be that while the American public is increasingly opposed to the war, the majority really does not want to hear about it. Moreover, if the plight of people in Biafra and more recently in Bangladesh—to say nothing of the My Lai massacres—did not touch the moral sensitivity of even a fraction of Americans, it is doubtful that the specter of Vietnamese killing Vietnamese would stir the national conscience either. As long as fewer Americans are in Vietnam, fewer Americans are being killed and the cost of the war is being reduced, opposition to the President's policy will be unlikely to change that policy.

All of these political calculations are based on the assumption that the situation in Vietnam in the fall of 1972 will not be appreciably different from what it is early this spring. What would happen politically in the United States if the situation were deteriorating in one way or another? One scenario would have the North Vietnamese stepping up their military attacks, defeating the Saigon government forces, and on the verge of nullifying Vietnamization. Such an eventuality might lead many Americans to believe that four years of Nixon's policy had been for naught, that essentially the United States was back to where it was in 1965. It is unlikely, however, that Vietnamization will prove to be such an immediate failure. The North Vietnamese forces are weaker and the Saigon forces stronger than most critics had predicted they would be a year or three years ago. Therefore, the kind of collapse posited in this scenario is highly improbable. But should it come to pass, latent opposition to the war would be rekindled and the President would be in a very difficult position at home.

A second scenario would have the North Vietnamese launching countrywide offensives with spotty victories, and the United States in retaliation carrying out a continuing program of air strikes against population and population-related targets in North Vietnam. This scenario seems more likely than the first. President Nixon has promised on many occasions to take "decisive action" in the event Hanoi increases the tempo of fighting in the South, and he has on a number of occasions carried out that threat. While it is true that past congressional, media and popular reactions to these "protective-reaction" bombing raids against North Vietnam have not been widespread, the image of U.S. planes hitting new targets in North Vietnam right before election time would remind the American people that the war was still going on. Latent opposition to the war would again emerge, to the probable disadvantage of the President.

If the war heats up in the summer and fall, it will be a political issue in the November elections. And it will be a bitter issue. Neither Republicans nor Democrats will want for superlative and invective. But no matter who is elected President in 1972, Vietnam will continue to take its toll on American society. If President Nixon is reëlected and the war grinds on indeterminately, the youth and the intellectuals of our nation will become ever more alienated. This is not a large group of people, but they are precious to the national conscience. If a Democrat is elected who is prepared to meet all of Hanoi's demands, end the war and not provide the Saigon government with any assistance whatever, he will be charged with having "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory." President Johnson's nightmare of the right-wing reaction could well become a reality.

The only somewhat hopeful way out of this dilemma is for President Nixon now to share responsibility with the present Congress in offering the sole proposal that still might break the negotiating deadlock—a terminal date for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and an end to all U.S. bombing in Indochina in return for the safe withdrawal of forces and the phased return of POWs. As I write, the President has not yet made this proposal. The nation, I believe, would unite behind this approach. Such unity would not be without impact on Hanoi's leaders, whatever *their* internal differences are, at this moment, with respect to a settlement of the war. For while Hanoi's leaders may not be able to agree to propose such a solution, they may be able to agree to accept it.

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The System Worked

by **LESLIE H. GELB**

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The Author: Leslie H. Gelb is a Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution.

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VIETNAM: THE SYSTEM WORKED

by Leslie H. Gelb

The story of United States policy toward Vietnam is either far better or far worse than generally supposed. Our Presidents and most of those who influenced their decisions did not stumble step by step into Vietnam, unaware of the quagmire. U.S. involvement did not stem from a failure to foresee consequences.

Vietnam was indeed a quagmire, but most of our leaders knew it. Of course there were optimists and periods where many were genuinely optimistic. But those periods were infrequent and short-lived and were invariably followed by periods of deep pessimism. Very few, to be sure, envisioned what the Vietnam situation would be like by 1968. Most realized, however, that "the light at the end of the tunnel" was very far away—if not finally unreachable. Nevertheless, our Presidents persevered. Given international compulsions to "keep our word" and "save face," domestic prohibitions against "losing," and their personal stakes, our leaders did "what was necessary," did it about the way they wanted, were prepared to pay the costs, and plowed on with a mixture of hope and doom. They "saw" no acceptable alternative.

Three propositions suggest why the United States became involved in Vietnam, why the process was gradual, and what the real expectations of our leaders were:

First, U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not mainly or mostly a story of step by step, inadvertent descent into unforeseen quicksand. It is primarily a story of why U.S. leaders considered that it was vital not to lose Vietnam by force to Communism. Our leaders believed Vietnam to be vital not for itself, but for what they thought its "loss" would mean internationally and domestically. Previous involvement made further involvement more unavoidable, and, to this extent, commitments were inherited. But judgments of Vietnam's "vitalness"—beginning with the Korean War—were sufficient in themselves to set the course for escalation.

Second, our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory in Vietnam. They were doing only what they thought was minimally necessary at each stage to keep Indochina, and later South Vietnam, out of Communist hands. This forced our Presidents to be brakemen, to do less than those who were urging military victory and to reject proposals for disengagement. It also meant that our Presidents wanted a negotiated settlement without fully realizing (though realizing more than their critics) that a civil war cannot be ended by political compromise.

Third, our Presidents and most of their lieutenants were not deluded by optimistic reports of progress and did not proceed on the basis of wishful thinking about winning a military victory in South Vietnam. They recognized that the steps they were taking were not adequate to win the war and that unless Hanoi relented, they would have to do more and more. Their strategy was to persevere in the hope that their will to continue—if not the practical effects of their actions—would cause the Communists to relent.

Each of these propositions is explored below.

I. Ends: "We Can't Afford to Lose"

Those who led the United States into Vietnam did so with their eyes open, knowing why, and believing they had the will to succeed. The deepening involvement was not inadvertent, but mainly deductive. It flowed with sureness from the perceived stakes and attendant high objectives. U.S. policy displayed remarkable continuity. There were not dozens of likely "turning points." Each postwar President inherited previous commitments. Each extended these commitments. Each administration from 1947 to 1969 believed that it was necessary to prevent the loss of Vietnam and, after 1954, South Vietnam by force to the Communists. The reasons for this varied from person to person, from bureaucracy to bureaucracy, over time and in emphasis. For the most part, however, they had little to do with Vietnam itself. A few men argued that Vietnam had intrinsic strategic military and economic importance, but this view never prevailed. The reasons rested on broader international, domestic, and bureaucratic considerations.

Our leaders gave the *international* repercussions of "losing" as their dominant explicit reason for Vietnam's importance. During the Truman Administration, Indochina's importance was measured in terms of French-American relations and Washington's desire to rebuild France into the centerpiece of future European security. After the cold war heated up and after the fall of China, a French defeat in Indochina was also seen as a defeat for the policy of containment. In the Eisenhower years, Indochina became a "testing ground" between the Free World and Communism and the basis for the famous "domino theory" by which the fall of Indochina would lead to the deterioration of American security around the globe. President Kennedy publicly reaffirmed the falling domino concept. His primary concern, however, was for his "reputation for action" after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Vienna meeting with Khrushchev, and the Laos crisis, and in meeting the challenge of "wars of national liberation" by counter-insurgency warfare. Under President Johnson, the code word rationales became Munich, credibility, commitments and the U.S. word, a watershed test of wills with Communism, raising the costs of aggression, and the principle that armed aggression shall not be allowed to succeed. There is every reason to assume that our leaders actually believed what they said, given both the cold war context in which they were all reared and the lack of contradictory evidence.

With very few exceptions, then, our leaders since World War II saw Vietnam as a vital factor in alliance politics, U.S.-Soviet-Chinese relations, and deterrence. This was as true in 1950 and 1954 as it was in 1961 and 1965. The record of United States military and economic assistance to fight Communism in Indochina tells this story quite clearly. From 1945 to 1951, U.S. aid to France totaled over $3.5 billion. Without this, the French position in Indochina would have been untenable. By 1951, the U.S. was paying about 40 percent of the costs of the Indochina war and our share was going up. In 1954, it is estimated, U.S. economic and technical assistance amounted to $703 million and military aid totaled almost $2 billion. This added up to almost 80 percent of the total French costs. From 1955 to 1961, U.S. military aid averaged about $200 million per year. This made South Vietnam the second largest recipient of such aid, topped only by Korea. By 1963, South Vietnam ranked first among recipients of military assistance. In economic assistance, it followed only India and Pakistan.

The *domestic* repercussions of "losing" Vietnam probably were equally important in Presidential minds. Letting Vietnam "go Communist" was undoubtedly seen as:

▷ opening the floodgates to domestic criticism and attack for being "soft on Communism" or just plain soft;

▷ dissipating Presidential influence by having to answer these charges;

▷ alienating conservative leadership in the Congress and thereby endangering the President's legislative program;

▷ jeopardizing election prospects for the President and his party;

▷ undercutting domestic support for a "responsible" U.S. world role; and

▷ enlarging the prospects for a right-wing reaction—the nightmare of a McCarthyite garrison state.

U.S. domestic politics required our leaders to maintain both a peaceful world and one in which Communist expansion was stopped. In order to have the public support necessary to use force against Communism, our leaders had to employ strong generalized, ideological rhetoric. The price of this rhetoric was consistency. How could our leaders shed American blood in Korea and keep large numbers of American troops in Europe at great expense unless they were also willing to stop Communism in Vietnam?

Bureaucratic judgments and stakes were also involved in defining U.S. interests in Vietnam. Most bureaucrats probably prompted or shared the belief of their leaders about the serious repercussions of losing Vietnam. Once direct bureaucratic presence was established after the French departure, this belief was reinforced and extended. The military had to prove that American arms and advice could succeed where the French could not. The Foreign Service had to prove that it could bring about political stability in Saigon and "build a nation." The CIA had to prove that pacification would work. AID had to prove that millions of dollars in assistance and advice could bring political returns.

The U.S. commitment was rationalized as early as 1950. It was set in 1955 when we replaced the French. Its logic was further fulfilled by President Kennedy. After 1965, when the U.S. took over the war, it was immeasurably hardened.

There was little conditional character to the U.S. commitment—except for avoiding "the big war." Every President talked about the ultimate responsibility resting with the Vietnamese (and the French before them). This "condition" seems to have been meant much more as a warning to our friends than a real limitation. In every crunch, it was swept aside. The only real limit applied to Russia and China. Our leaders were not prepared to run the risks of nuclear war or even the risks of a direct conventional military confrontation with the Soviet Union and China. These were separate decisions. The line between them and everything else done in Vietnam always held firm. With this exception, the commitment was always defined in terms of the objective to deny the Communists control over all Vietnam. This was further defined to preclude coalition governments with the Communists.

The importance of the objective was evaluated in terms of cost, and the perceived costs of disengagement outweighed the cost of further engagement. Some allies might urge disengagement, but then condemn the U.S. for doing so. The domestic groups which were expected to criticize growing involvement always were believed to be outnumbered by those who would have attacked "cutting and running." The question of whether our leaders would have started down the road if they knew this would mean over half a million men in Vietnam, over 40,000 U.S. deaths, and the expenditure of well over $100 billion is historically irrelevant. Only Presidents Kennedy and Johnson had to confront the possibility of these large costs. The point is that each administration was prepared to pay the costs it could foresee for itself. No one seemed to have a better solution. Each could at least pass the baton on to the next.

Presidents could not treat Vietnam as if it were "vital" without creating high stakes internationally, domestically, and within their own bureaucracies. But the rhetoric conveyed different messages:

To the Communists, it was a signal that their actions would be met by counteractions.

To the American people, it set the belief that the President would ensure that the threatened nation did not fall into Communist hands—although without the anticipation of sacrificing American lives.

To the Congress, it marked the President's responsibility to ensure that Vietnam did not go Communist and maximized incentives for legislators to support him or at least remain silent.

To the U.S. professional military, it was a promise that U.S. forces would be used, if necessary and to the degree necessary, to defend Vietnam.

To the professional U.S. diplomat, it meant letting our allies know that the U.S. cared about their fate.

To the President, it laid the groundwork for the present action and showed that he was prepared to take the next step to keep Vietnam non-Communist.

Words were making Vietnam into a showcase—an Asian Berlin. In the process, Vietnam grew into a test case of U.S. credibility—to opponents, to allies, but perhaps most importantly, to ourselves. Public opinion polls seemed to confirm the political dangers. Already established bureaucratic judgments about the importance of Vietnam matured into cherished convictions and organizational interests. The war dragged on.

Each successive President, initially caught by his own belief, was further ensnarled by his own rhetoric, and the basis for the belief went unchallenged. Debates revolved around how to do things better, and whether they could be done, not whether they were worth doing. Prior to 1961, an occasional senator or Southeast Asian specialist would raise a lonely and weak voice in doubt. Some press criticism began thereafter. And later still, wandering American minstrels returned from the field to tell their tales of woe in private. General Ridgway as Chief of Staff of the Army in 1954 questioned the value of Vietnam as against its potential costs and dangers, and succeeded in blunting a proposed U.S. military initiative, although not for the reasons he advanced. Under Secretary of State George Ball raised the issue of international priorities in the summer of 1965 and lost. Clark Clifford as Secretary of Defense openly challenged the winnability of the war, as well as Vietnam's strategic significance, and argued for domestic priorities. But no systematic or serious examination of Vietnam's importance to the United States was ever undertaken within the government. Endless assertions passed for analysis. Presidents neither encouraged nor permitted serious questioning, for to do so would be to foster the idea that their resolve was something less than complete. The objective of a non-Communist Vietnam, and after 1954 a non-Communist South Vietnam, drove U.S. involvement ever more deeply each step of the way.

II. Means: "Take the Minimal Necessary Steps"

None of our Presidents was seeking total victory over the Vietnamese Communists. War critics who wanted victory always knew this. Those who wanted the U.S. to get out never believed it. Each President was essentially doing what he thought was minimally necessary to prevent a Communist victory during his tenure in office. Each, of course, sought to strengthen the anti-Communist Vietnamese forces, but with the aim of a negotiated settlement. Part of the tragedy of Vietnam was that the compromises our Presidents were prepared to offer could never lead to an end of the war. These preferred compromises only served to reinforce the conviction of both Communist and anti-Communist Vietnamese that they had to fight to the finish in their civil war. And so, more minimal steps were always necessary.

Our Presidents were pressured on all sides. The pressures for victory came mainly from the inside and were reflected on the outside. From inside the administrations, three forces almost invariably pushed hard. *First*, the military establishment generally initiated requests for broadening and intensifying U.S. military action. Our professional military placed great weight on the strategic significance of Vietnam; they were given a job to do; their prestige was involved; and of crucial importance (in the 1960's)—the lives of many American servicemen were being lost. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group) Chiefs and later the Commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam were the focal points for these pressures. *Second*, our Ambassadors in Saigon, supported by the State Department, at times pressed for and often supported big steps forward. Their reasons were similar to those of the military. *Thirdly*, an ever-present group of "fixers" was making urgent demands to strengthen and broaden the Saigon government in order to achieve political victory. Every executive agency had its fixers. They were usually able men whose entire preoccupation was to make things better in Vietnam. From outside the administration, there were hawks who insisted on winning and hawks who wanted to "win or get out." Capitol Hill hawks, the conservative press, and, for many years, Catholic organizations were in the forefront.

The pressures for disengagement and for de-escalation derived mostly from the outside with occasional and often unknown allies from within. Small for most of the Vietnam years, these forces grew steadily in strength from 1965 onward. Isolated congressmen and senators led the fight. First they did so on anticolonialist grounds. Later their objections developed moral aspects (interfering in a civil war) and extended to non-winnability, domestic priorities, and the senselessness of the war. Peace organizations and student groups in particular came to dominate headlines and air time. Journalists played a critical role—especially through television reports. From within each administration, opposition could be found: (1) among isolated military men who did not want the U.S. in an Asian land war; (2) among some State Department intelligence and area specialists who knew Vietnam and believed the U.S. objective was unattainable at any reasonable price; and (3) within the civilian agencies of the Defense Department and isolated individuals at State and CIA, particularly after 1966, whose efforts were trained on finding a politically feasible way out.

Our Presidents reacted to the pressures as brakemen, pulling the switch against both the advocates of "decisive escalation" and the advocates of disengagement. The politics of the Presidency largely dictated this role, but the personalities of the Presidents were also important. None were as ideological as many persons around them. All were basically centrist politicians.

Their immediate aim was always to prevent a Communist takeover. The actions they approved were usually only what was minimally necessary to that aim. Each President determined the "minimal necessity" by trial and error and his own judgment. They might have done more and done it more rapidly if they were convinced that: (1) the threat of a Communist takeover were more immediate, (2) U.S. domestic politics would have been more permissive, (3) the government of South Vietnam had the requisite political stability and military potential for effective use and (4) the job really would have gotten done. After 1965, however, the minimal necessity became the maximum they could get given the same domestic and international constraints.

The tactic of the minimally necessary decision makes optimum sense for the politics of the Presidency. Even our strongest Presidents have tended to shy away from decisive action. It has been too uncertain, too risky. They derive their strength from movement (the image of a lot of activity) and building and neutralizing opponents. Too seldom has there been forceful moral leadership; it may even be undemocratic. The small step that maintains the momentum gives the President the chance to gather more political support. It gives the appearance of minimizing possible mistakes. It allows time to gauge reactions. It serves as a pressure-relieving valve against those who want to do more. It can be doled out. Above all, it gives the President something to do next time.

The tactic makes consummate sense when it is believed that nothing will fully work or that the costs of a "winning" move would be too high. This was the case with Vietnam. This decision-making tactic explains why the U.S. involvement in Vietnam was gradual and step by step.

While the immediate aim was to prevent a Communist victory and improve the position of the anti-Communists, the longer term goal was a political settlement. As late as February 1947, Secretary of State Marshall expressed the hope that "a pacific basis of adjustment of the difficulties" between France and the Vietminh could be found.[1] After that, Truman's policy hardened, but there is no evidence to suggest that until 1950 he was urging the French not to settle with the Vietnamese Communists. Eisenhower, it should be remembered, was the President who tacitly agreed (by not intervening in 1954) to the creation of a Communist state in North Vietnam. President Kennedy had all he could do to prevent complete political collapse in South Vietnam. He had, therefore, little basis on which to compromise. President Johnson inherited this political instability, and to add to his woes, he faced in 1965 what seemed to be the prospect of a Communist military victory. Yet, by his standing offer for free and internationally supervised elections, he apparently was prepared to accept Communist participation in the political life of the South.

By traditional diplomatic standards of negotiations between sovereign states, these were not fatuous compromises. One compromise was, in effect, to guarantee that the Communists could remain in secure control of North Vietnam. The U.S. would not seek to overthrow this regime. The other compromise was to allow the Communists in South Vietnam to seek power along the lines of Communist parties in France and Italy, i.e. to give them a "permanent minority position."

But the real struggle in Vietnam was not between sovereign states. It was among Vietnamese. It was a civil war and a war for national independence.

Herein lies the paradox and the tragedy of Vietnam. Most of our leaders and their critics did see that Vietnam was a quagmire, but did not see that the real stakes—who shall govern Vietnam—were not negotiable. Free elections, local sharing of power, international supervision, cease-fires—none of these could serve as a basis for settlement. What were legitimate compromises from Washington's point of view were matters of life and death to the Vietnamese. For American leaders, the stakes were "keeping their word" and saving their political necks. For the Vietnamese, the stakes were their lives and their lifelong political aspirations. Free elections meant bodily exposure to the Communist guerrillas and likely defeat to the anti-Communists. The risk was too great. There was no trust, no confidence.

The Vietnam war could no more be settled by traditional diplomatic compromises than any other civil war. President Lincoln could not settle with the South. The Spanish Republicans and General Franco's Loyalists could not have conceivably mended their fences by elections. None of the post-World War II insurgencies—Greece, Malaya, and the Philippines—ended with a negotiated peace. In each of these cases, the civil differences were put to rest—if at all—only by the logic of war.

It is commonly acknowledged that Vietnam would have fallen to the Communists in 1945-46, in 1954, and in 1965 had it not been for the intervention of first the French and then the Americans. The Vietnamese Communists, who were also by history the Vietnamese nationalists, would not accept only part of a prize for which they had paid so heavily. The anti-Communist Vietnamese, protected by the French and the Americans, would not put themselves at the Communists' mercy.

It may be that our Presidents understood this better than their critics. The critics, especially on the political left, fought for "better compromises," not realizing that even the best could not be good enough, and fought for broad nationalist governments, not realizing there was no middle force in Vietnam. Our Presidents, it seems, recognized that there was no middle ground and that "better compromises" would frighten our Saigon allies without bringing about a compromise peace. And they believed that a neutralization formula would compromise South Vietnam away to the Communists. So the longer-term aim of peace repeatedly gave way to the immediate needs of the war and the next necessary step.

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[1] New York Times, *February 8, 1947.*

III. *Expectations: "We Must Persevere"*

Each new step was taken not because of wishful thinking or optimism about its leading to a victory in South Vietnam. Few of our leaders thought that they could win the war in a conventional sense or that the Communists would be decimated to a point that they would simply fade away. Even as new and further steps were taken, coupled with expressions of optimism, many of our leaders realized that more—and still more—would have to be done. Few of these men felt confident about how it would all end or when. After 1965, however, they allowed the impression of "winnability" to grow in order to justify their already heavy investment and domestic support for the war.

The strategy always was to persevere. Perseverance, it seemed, was the only way to avoid or postpone having to pay the domestic political costs of failure. Finally, perseverance, it was hoped, would convince the Communists that our will to continue was firm. Perhaps, then, with domestic support for perseverance, with bombing North Vietnam, and with inflicting heavy casualties in the South, the Communists would relent. Perhaps, then, a compromise could be negotiated to save the Communists' face without giving them South Vietnam.

Optimism was a part of the "gamesmanship" of Vietnam. It had a purpose. Personal-organizational optimism was the product of a number of motivations and calculations:

▷ Career services tacitly and sometimes explicitly pressured their professionals to impart good news.

▷ Good news was seen as a job well done; bad news as personal failure.

▷ The reporting system was set up so that assessments were made by the implementors.

▷ Optimism bred optimism so that it was difficult to be pessimistic this time if you were optimistic the last time.

▷ People told their superiors what they thought they wanted to hear.

▷ The American ethic is to get the job done.

Policy optimism also sprang from several rational needs:

▷ To maintain domestic support for the war.

▷ To keep up the morale of our Vietnamese allies and build some confidence and trust between us and them.

▷ To stimulate military and bureaucratic morale to work hard.

There were, however, genuine optimists and grounds for genuine optimism. Some periods looked promising: the year preceding the French downfall at Dienbienphu; the years of the second Eisenhower Presidency when most attention was riveted on Laos and before the insurgency was stepped up in South Vietnam; 1962 and early 1963 before the strategic hamlet pacification program collapsed; and the last six months of 1967 before the 1968 Tet offensive.

Many additional periods by comparison with previous years yielded a sense of real improvement. By most conventional standards—the size and firepower of friendly Vietnamese forces, the number of hamlets pacified, the number of "free elections" being held, the number of Communists killed, and so forth—reasonable men could and did think in cautiously optimistic terms.

But comparison with years past is an illusory measure when it is not coupled with judgments about how far there still is to go and how likely it is that the goal can ever be reached. It was all too easy to confuse short-term breathing spells with long-term trends and to confuse "things getting better" with "winning." Many of those who had genuine hope suffered from either a lack of knowledge about Vietnam or a lack of sensitivity toward politics or both.

The basis for pessimism and the warning signals were always present. Public portrayals of success glowed more brightly than the full range of classified reporting. Readily available informal and personal accounts were less optimistic still. The political instability of our Vietnamese allies—from Bao Dai through Diem to President Thieu have always been apparent. The weaknesses of the armed forces of our Vietnamese allies were common knowledge. Few years went by when the fighting did not gain in intensity. Our leaders did not have to know much about Vietnam to see all this.

Most of our leaders saw the Vietnam quagmire for what it was. Optimism was, by and large, put in perspective. This means that many knew that each step would be followed by another. Most seemed to have understood that more assistance would be required either to improve the relative position of our Vietnamese allies or simply to prevent a deterioration of their position. Almost each year and often several times a year, key decisions had to be made to prevent deterioration or collapse. These decisions were made with hard bargaining, but rapidly enough for us now to perceive a preconceived consensus to go on. Sometimes several new steps were decided at once, but announced and implemented piecemeal. The whole pattern conveyed the feeling of more to come.

With a tragic sense of "no exit," our leaders stayed their course. They seemed to hope more than expect that something would "give." The hope was to convince the Vietnamese Communists through perseverance that the U.S. would stay in South Vietnam until they abandoned their struggle. The hope, in a sense, was the product of disbelief. How could a tiny, backward Asian country *not* have a breaking point when opposed by the might of the United States? How could they not relent and negotiate with the U.S.?

And yet, few could answer two questions with any confidence: Why should the Communists abandon tomorrow the goals they had been paying so dear a price to obtain yesterday? What was there really to negotiate? No one seemed to be able to develop a persuasive scenario on how the war could end by peaceful means.

Our Presidents, given their politics and thinking, had nothing to do but persevere. But the Communists' strategy was also to persevere, to make the U.S. go home. It was and is a civil war for national independence. It was and is a Greek tragedy.

IV. After Twenty-Five Years

A quick review of history supports these interpretations. To the Roosevelt Administration during World War II, Indochina was not perceived as a "vital" area. The United States defeated Japan without Southeast Asia, and Indochina was not occupied by the allies until *after* Japan's defeat. FDR spoke informally to friends and newsmen of placing Indochina under United Nations trusteeship after the war, but—aware of French, British and U.S. bureaucratic hostility to this—made no detailed plans and asked for no staff work prior to his death. For all practical purposes, Truman inherited *no* Southeast Asia policy.

In 1946 and 1947, the U.S. acquiesced in the re-establishment of French sovereignty. Our policy was a passive one of hoping for a negotiated settlement of the "difficulties" between Paris and the Vietminh independence movement of Ho Chi Minh. To the south, in Indonesia, we had started to pressure the Dutch to grant independence and withdraw, and a residue of anticolonialism remained in our first inchoate approaches to an Indochina policy as well.

But events in Europe and China changed the context from mid-1947 on. Two important priorities were to rearm and strengthen France as the cornerstone of European defense and recovery in the face of Russian pressure, and to prevent a further expansion of victorious Chinese Communism. The Truman Doctrine depicted a world full of dominoes. In May 1950, before Korea, Secretary of State Acheson announced that the U.S. would provide military and economic assistance to the French and their Indochinese allies for the direct purpose of combating Communist expansion.[2] After years of hesitating, Truman finally decided that anti-Communism was more important than anticolonialism in Indochina.

Acheson admits that U.S. policy was a "muddled hodgepodge":

> The criticism, however, fails to recognize the limits on the extent to which one may successfully coerce an ally. . . . Furthermore, the result of withholding help to France would, at most, have removed the colonial power. It could not have made the resulting situation a beneficial one either for Indochina or for Southeast Asia, or in the more important effort of furthering the stability and defense of Europe. So while we may have tried to muddle through and were certainly not successful, I could not think then or later of a better course. One can suggest, perhaps, doing nothing. That might have had merit, but as an attitude for the leader of a great alliance toward an important ally, indeed one essential to a critical endeavor, it had its demerits, too.[3]

Several months after the Korean War began, Acheson recalled the warning of an "able colleague": "Not only was there real danger that our efforts would fail in their immediate purpose and waste valuable resources in the process, but we were moving into a position in Indochina in which 'our responsibilities tend to supplant rather than complement those of the French'." Acheson then remembers: "I decided however, that having put our hand to the plow, we would not look back."[4] He decided this despite the

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[2] Department of State Bulletin, *May 1950, p. 821.*

[3] *Dean Acheson,* Present at the Creation, *(New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 673.*

[4] Ibid., *p. 674.*

fact that he "recognized as no longer valid an earlier French intention to so weaken the enemy before reducing French forces in Indochina that indigenous forces could handle the situation."[5]

V. The Eisenhower Administration

President Eisenhower inherited the problem. Although, with Vietminh successes, the situation took on graver overtones, he, too, pursued a policy of "minimum action" to prevent the total "loss" of Vietnam to Communism. Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's assistant, explains how the problem was seen in the mid-1950's:

> If the Communists had pushed on with an aggressive offensive after the fall of Dienbienphu, instead of stopping and agreeing to stay out of Southern Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, there was a strong possibility that the United States would have moved against them. A complete Communist conquest of Indochina would have had far graver consequence for the West than a Red victory in Korea.[6]

Apparently the President felt he could live with Communist control in the restricted area of North Vietnam, away from the rest of Southeast Asia.

Eisenhower did not take the minimal necessary step to save *all* of Indochina, but he did take the necessary steps to prevent the loss of most of Indochina. He paid almost all the French war cost, increased the U.S. military advisory mission, supplied forty B-26's to the French, and continued the threat of U.S. intervention, first by "united action" and then by forming SEATO. In taking these actions, Eisenhower was deciding against Vice-President Nixon and Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who favored U.S. intervention in force, and against General Ridgway, Chief of the Army

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[5] Ibid., *p. 676-7.*

[6] *Sherman Adams,* Firsthand Report *(New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 120.*

Staff, who opposed any action that could lead to an Asian land war. He was treading the well-worn middle path of doing just enough to balance off contradictory domestic, bureaucratic, and international pressures. The Vietnamese Communists agreed to the compromise, believing that winning the full prize was only a matter of time.

In public statements and later in his memoirs, President Eisenhower gave glimpses of his reasoning. At the time of Dienbienphu, he noted, ". . . we ought to look at this thing with some optimism and some determination . . . long faces and defeatism don't win battles."[7] Later he wrote, "I am convinced that the French could not win the war because the internal political situation in Vietnam, weak and confused, badly weakened their military position."[8] But he persevered nevertheless, believing that "the decision to give this aid was almost compulsory. The United States had no real alternative unless we were to abandon Southeast Asia."[9]

The Geneva Conference of 1954 was followed by eighteen bleak and pessimistic months as official Washington wondered whether the pieces could be put back together. Despite or perhaps because of the pessimism, U.S. aid was increased. Then, in the fall of 1956, Dulles could say: "We have a clean base there now, without a taint of colonialism. Dienbienphu was a blessing in disguise."[10] The years of "cautious optimism" had begun.

President Eisenhower kept the U.S. out of war because he allowed a territorial compromise with the Communists. More critically, he decided to replace the French and maintain a direct U.S. presence in Indochina. With strong rhetoric, military training programs, support for Ngo Dinh Diem in his refusal to hold the elections prescribed by the Geneva accords, and continuing military and economic assistance, he made the new state or "zone" of South Vietnam an American responsibility. Several years of military quiet in South Vietnam did not hide the smoldering political turmoil in that country nor did it obscure the newspaper headlines which regularly proclaimed that the war in Indochina had shifted to Laos.

VI. The Kennedy Administration

The Administration of John F. Kennedy began in an aura of domestic sacrifice and international confrontation. The inauguration speech set the tone of U.S. responsibilities in "hazardous and dangerous" times.

Vietnam had a special and immediate importance which derived from the general international situation. Kennedy's predictions about dangerous times came true quickly—and stayed true—and he wanted to show strength to the Communists. But it was also the precarious situation in Laos and the "neutralist" compromise which Kennedy was preparing for Laos that were driving the President deeper into Vietnam. In Sorensen's words, Kennedy was "skeptical of the extent of our involvement [in Vietnam] but unwilling to abandon his predecessor's pledge or permit a Communist conquest. . . ."[11]

Kennedy had to face three basic general decisions. First, was top priority to go to political reform or fighting the war? On this issue the fixers, who wanted to give priority to political reform, were arrayed against the military. Second, should the line of involvement be drawn at combat units? On this issue the fixers were more quiet than in opposition. The military and the Country Team pushed hard—even urging the President to threaten

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[7] Public Papers of the Presidents, Eisenhower, 1954, *p. 471. This remark was made on May 12, 1954.*

[8] *Dwight D. Eisenhower,* Mandate for Change, *(New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 372.*

[9] Ibid., *p. 373.*

[10] *Emmet John Hughes,* The Ordeal of Power, *(New York: Dell, 1962), p. 182. Eisenhower himself wrote that in 1954 "The strongest reason of all for United States refusal to respond by itself to French pleas was our tradition of anti-colonialism." (in* Mandate for Change, *p. 373)*

[11] *Theodore Sorensen,* Kennedy, *(New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 639.*

Hanoi with U.S. bombing. Some counterweight came from State and the White House staff. Third, should the President make a clear, irrevocable and open-ended commitment to prevent a Communist victory? Would this strengthen or weaken the U.S. hand in Saigon? Would it frighten away the Communists? What would be the domestic political consequences?

Kennedy's tactics and decisions—like Eisenhower's—followed the pattern of doing what was minimally necessary. On the political versus military priority issue, Kennedy did not make increasing military assistance definitively contingent on political reform, but he pointed to the absence of reform as the main reason for limiting the U.S. military role. On the combat unit issue, according to biographer Sorensen, "Kennedy never made a final negative decision on troops. In typical Kennedy fashion, he made it difficult for any of the pro-intervention advocates to charge him privately with weakness."[12] On the third issue, he avoided an open-ended commitment, but escalated his rhetoric about the importance of Vietnam. While he did authorize an increase of U.S. military personnel from 685 to 16,000, he did so slowly, and not in two or three big decisions. He continually doled out the increases. He gave encouragement to bureaucratic planning and studying as a safety valve—a valve he thought he could control. He kept a very tight rein on information to the public about the war. In Salinger's words, he "was not anxious to admit the existence of a real war . . ."[13] By minimizing U.S. involvement, Kennedy was trying to avoid public pressures either to do more or to do less.

The President would make it "their" war until he had no choice but to look at it in a different light. He would not look at it in another light until Diem, who looked like a losing horse, was replaced. He would not gamble on long odds. But it is not clear what he expected to get as a replacement for Diem.

With the exception of much of 1962, which even the North Vietnamese have called "Diem's year," the principal Kennedy decisions were made in an atmosphere of deterioration, not progress, in Vietnam. This feeling of deterioration explains why Kennedy dispatched so many high-level missions to Vietnam. As Kennedy's biographers have written, the President was not really being told he was winning, but how much more he would have to do.

Writing in 1965, Theodore Sorensen summed up the White House view of events following the Diem coup in November 1963:

> The President, while eager to make clear that our aim was to get out of Vietnam, had always been doubtful about the optimistic reports constantly filed by the military on the progress of the war. . . . The struggle could well be, he thought, this nation's severest test of endurance and patience. . . . He was simply going to weather it out, a nasty, untidy mess to which there was no other acceptable solution. Talk of abandoning so unstable an ally and so costly a commitment 'only makes it easy for the Communists,' said the President. 'I think we should stay.'[14]

VII. The Johnson Administration

Lyndon Johnson assumed office with a reputation as a pragmatic politician and not a cold war ideologue. His history on Southeast Asia indicated caution and comparative restraint. And yet it was this same man who as President presided over and led the U.S. into massive involvement.

Three facts conspired to make it easier for Johnson to take the plunge on the assumed importance of Vietnam than his predecessors. First, the world was a safer place to live in and Vietnam was the only continuing crisis. Europe was secure. The Sino-Soviet split had deepened. Mutual nuclear deterrence existed between the two superpowers. Second, the situation in Vietnam was more desperate than it ever had been. If the U.S. had not intervened in 1965, South Vietnam would have been conquered by the Communists. Third, after years of effort, the U.S. conventional military forces were big enough and ready enough to intervene. Unlike his predecessors, Johnson had the military capability to back up his words.

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[12] Ibid., p. 654

[13] *Pierre Salinger*, With Kennedy, *(New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp.* 319-329.

[14] *Sorensen*, op. cit., *p.* 661.

In sum, Vietnam became relatively more important, it was in greater danger, and the U.S. was in a position to do something about it.

At Johns Hopkins in April 1965, the President told the American people what he would do: "We will do everything necessary to reach that objective [of no external interference in South Vietnam], and we will do only what is absolutely necessary." But in order to prevent defeat and in order to keep the faith with his most loyal supporters, the minimum necessary became the functional equivalent of gradual escalation. The Air Force and the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) pressed hard for full systems bombing—the authority to destroy 94 key North Vietnamese targets in 16 days. Johnson, backed and pressured in the other direction by Secretary McNamara, doled out approval for new targets over three years in a painstaking and piecemeal fashion. Johnson accommodated dovish pressure and the advice of the many pragmatists who surrounded him by making peace overtures. But these overtures were either accompanied with or followed by escalation. Johnson moved toward those who wanted three-quarters of a million U.S. fighting men in Vietnam, but he never got there. Guided by judgments of domestic repercussion and influenced again by McNamara, the President made at least eight separate decisions on U.S. force levels in Vietnam over a four-year period.[15] For the "fixers" who felt that U.S. conduct of the war missed its political essence and for the doves who wanted to see something besides destruction, Johnson placed new emphasis on "the other war"—pacification, nation-building, and political development—in February 1966. Johnson referred to this whole complex of actions and the air war in particular as his attempt to "seduce not rape" the North Vietnamese.

The objective of the Johnson Administration was to maintain an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. In the later years, this was rephrased: "allowing the South Vietnamese to determine their own future without external interference." As the President crossed the old barriers in pursuit of this objective, he established new ones. While he ordered the bombing of North Vietnam, he would not approve the bombing of targets which ran the risk of confrontation with China and Russia. While he permitted the U.S. force level in Vietnam to go over one-half million men, he would not agree to call up the Reserves. While he was willing to spend $25 billion in one year on the war, he would not put the U.S. economy on a wartime mobilization footing. But the most important Johnson barrier was raised against invading Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam. This limitation was also a cornerstone in the President's hopes for a compromise settlement. He would agree to the permanent existence of North Vietnam—even help that country economically—if North Vietnam would extend that same right to South Vietnam.

In order to sustain public and bureaucratic support for his policy, Johnson's method was to browbeat and isolate his opponents. To the American people, he painted the alternatives to what he was doing as irresponsible or reckless. In either case, the result would be a greater risk of future general war. The bureaucracy used this same technique of creating the bug-out or bomb-out extremes in order to maintain as many of its own members in "the middle road." The price of consensus—within the bureaucracy and in the public at large—was invariably a middle road of contradictions and no priorities for action.

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[15] *See the Chronology in U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee,* Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam, *March 1969.*

President Johnson was the master of consensus. On Vietnam this required melding the proponents of negotiations with the proponents of military victory. The technique for maintaining this Vietnam consensus was gradual escalation punctuated by dramatic peace overtures. As the war was escalated without an end in sight, the numbers of people Johnson could hold together diminished. The pressures for disengagement or for "decisive military action" became enormous, but with the "hawks" always outnumbering and more strategically placed than the "doves."

Johnson knew he had inherited a deteriorating situation in Vietnam. Vietcong military successes and constant change in the Saigon government from 1964 to 1966 were not secrets to anyone. Throughout the critical year of 1965, he struck the themes of endurance and more-to-come. In his May 4, 1965 requests for Vietnam Supplemental Appropriations he warned: "I see no choice but to continue the course we are on, filled as it is with peril and uncertainty." In his July 28, 1965 press conference he announced a new 125,000 troop ceiling and went on to say: "Additional forces will be needed later, and they will be sent as requested."

Talk about "turning corners" and winning a military victory reached a crescendo in 1967. At the same time a new counterpoint emerged—"stalemate."[16] The message of the stalemate proponents was that the U.S. was strong enough to prevent defeat, but that the situation defied victory. Hanoi would continue to match the U.S. force build-up and would not "cry uncle" over the bombing. The Saigon government and army had basic political and structural problems which they were unlikely to be able to overcome. Stalemate, it was urged, should be used as a basis for getting a compromise settlement with Hanoi.

These arguments were not lost on the President. At Guam in March 1967, while others around him were waxing eloquent about progress, the President was guardedly optimistic, speaking of "a favorable turning point, militarily and politically." But after one of the meetings he was reported to have said: "We have a difficult, a serious, long-drawn-out, agonizing problem that we do not have an answer for."[17] Nor did the President overlook the effects of the 1968 Tet offensive, coming as it did after many months of virtually unqualified optimism by him and by others. He stopped the bombing partially, increased troop strength slightly, made a peace overture, and announced his retirement.

In November 1963, Johnson is quoted as saying: "I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."[18] In the spring of 1965, Lady Bird Johnson quoted him as saying: "I can't get out. I can't finish it with what I have got. So what the Hell can I do?"[19] President Johnson, like his predecessors, persevered and handed the war on to his successor.

VIII. Where Do We Go From Here?

If Vietnam were a story of how the system failed, that is, if our leaders did not do what they wanted to do or if they did not realize what they were doing or what was happening, it would be easy to package a large and assorted box of policy-making panaceas. For example: Fix the method of reporting from the field. Fix the way progress is measured in a guerrilla war. Make sure the President sees all the real alternatives. But these are all third-order issues, because the U.S. political-bureaucratic system did not fail; it worked.

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[16] *R. W. Apple, "Vietnam: The Signs of Stalemate,"* New York Times, *August 7, 1967.*

[17] *Quoted in Henry Brandon,* Anatomy of Error, *(Boston: Gambit, 1969), p. 102.*

[18] *Tom Wicker,* JFK and LBJ, *(New York: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 208.*

[19] *Lady Bird Johnson,* A White House Diary, *(New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 248.*

Our leaders felt they had to prevent the loss of Vietnam to Communism, and they have succeeded so far in doing just that. Most of those who made Vietnam policy still believe that they did the right thing and lament only the domestic repercussions of their actions. It is because the price of attaining this goal has been so dear in lives, trust, dollars, and priorities, and the benefits so intangible, remote, and often implausible, that these leaders and we ourselves are forced to seek new answers and new policies.

Paradoxically, the way to get these new answers is not by asking why did the system fail, but why did it work so tragically well. There is, then, only one first-order issue—how and why does our political-bureaucratic system decide what is vital and what is not? By whom, in what manner, and for what reasons was it decided that all Vietnam must not fall into Communist hands?

Almost all of our leaders since 1949 shared this conviction. Only a few voices in the wilderness were raised in opposition. Even as late as mid-1967, most critics were arguing that the U.S. could not afford to lose or be "driven from the field," that the real problem was our bombing of North Vietnam, and that this had to be stopped in order to bring about a negotiated settlement. Fewer still were urging that such a settlement should involve a coalition government with the Communists. Hardly anyone was saying that the outcome in Vietnam did not matter.

There is little evidence of much critical thinking about the relation of Vietnam to U.S. security. Scholars, journalists, politicians, and bureaucrats all seem to have assumed either that Vietnam was "vital" to U.S. national security or that the American people would not stand for the loss of "another" country to Communism.

Anti-Communism has been and still is a potent force in American politics, and most people who were dealing with the Vietnam problem simply believed that the Congress and the public would "punish" those who

were "soft on Communism." Our leaders not only anticipated this kind of public reaction, but believed that there were valid reasons for not permitting the Communists to take all of Vietnam by force. In other words, they believed in what they were doing on the national security "merits." The domino theory, which was at the heart of the matter, rested on the widely shared attitude that security was indivisible, that weakness in one place would only invite aggression in others.

What can be done?

The President can do more than Presidents have in the past to call his national security bureaucracy to task. He can show the bureaucracy that he expects it to be more rigorous in determining what is vital or important or unimportant. Specifically, he can reject reasoning which simply asserts that security is indivisible, and he can foster the belief that while the world is an interconnected whole, actions can be taken in certain parts of the world to compensate for actions which are not taken elsewhere. For example, if the real concern about Vietnam were the effect of its loss on Japan, the Middle East and Berlin, could we not take actions in each of these places to mitigate the "Vietnam fallout"?

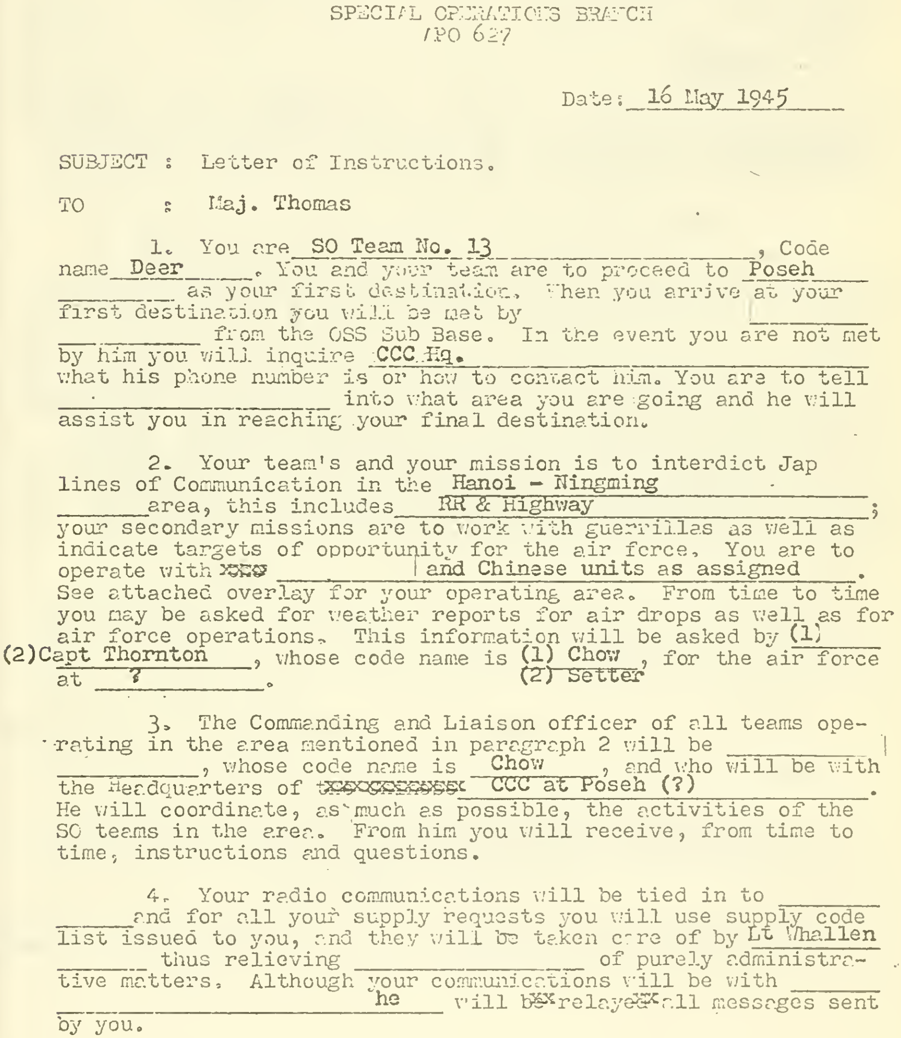
None of these efforts with the bureaucracy can succeed, however, unless there is a change in general political attitudes as well. If anti-Communism persists as an overriding domestic political issue it will also be the main bureaucratic issue. Altering public attitudes will take time, education, and political courage—and it will create a real dilemma for the President. If the President goes "too far" in re-educating public and congressional opinions about Communism, he may find that he will have little support for threatening or using military force when he believes that our security really is at stake. In the end, it will still be the President who is held responsible for U.S. security. Yet, if our Vietnam experience has taught us anything, it is that the President must begin the process of re-education despite the risks.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO OSS ACTIVITY IN FRENCH INDOCHINA

INTRODUCTION

Sections I, II, and III have been reproduced by offset printing in order to convey to the reader a better sense of the original documents. Because of their poor legibility the documents in section IV were set in print keeping the format of the original documents.

I. THE "DEER" MISSION TO VIET MINH HEADQUARTERS, JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1945



SPECIAL OPERATIONS BRANCH
APO 627

Date: 16 May 1945

SUBJECT : Letter of Instructions.

TO : Maj. Thomas

1. You are SO Team No. 13, Code name Deer. You and your team are to proceed to Poseh ________ as your first destination. When you arrive at your first destination you will be met by ________ from the OSS Sub Base. In the event you are not met by him you will inquire CCC Hq. what his phone number is or how to contact him. You are to tell ________ into what area you are going and he will assist you in reaching your final destination.

2. Your team's and your mission is to interdict Jap lines of Communication in the Hanoi - Ningming area, this includes RR & Highway; your secondary missions are to work with guerrillas as well as indicate targets of opportunity for the air force. You are to operate with ~~xxx~~ and Chinese units as assigned. See attached overlay for your operating area. From time to time you may be asked for weather reports for air drops as well as for air force operations. This information will be asked by (1) ________ (2)Capt Thornton, whose code name is (1) Chow (2) Setter, for the air force at ?.

3. The Commanding and Liaison officer of all teams operating in the area mentioned in paragraph 2 will be ________, whose code name is Chow, and who will be with the Headquarters of ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ CCC at Poseh (?). He will coordinate, as much as possible, the activities of the SO teams in the area. From him you will receive, from time to time, instructions and questions.

4. Your radio communications will be tied in to ________ and for all your supply requests you will use supply code list issued to you, and they will be taken care of by Lt Whallen thus relieving ________ of purely administrative matters. Although your communications will be with ________ he will b~~xx~~relaye~~xx~~all messages sent by you.

Received at Kunming
27 July 1945 via

17 July 1945
Kimlung
Tonkin
F.I.C.

To : Chow via Wampler

From: Deer Report #1

I. The Landing:

We all landed safely. Sgt Zeilski, Lt Montfort and I landed in trees and got a few minor scratches. While hanging in the tree I whipped out my Handie Talkie and was able to hear you answer once. I was unable to pull out my very pistol.

II. The Reception:

We were first greeted by of AGAS and by the boy from Boston, and employed by GBT. I then was called on for a short speech to the guard. They presented arms and I gave forth a few flowery sentences. The guard consisted of about 200 armed men. Armament consisted of French rifles, a few Brens, a few tommies, a few carbines and a few stens. I was then escorted to Mr. Hoe, one of the big leaders of the VML (Viet Minh League) Party. He speaks excellent English but is very weak physically as he recently walked in from Tsingsi. He received us most cordially. We then were shown our quarters. They had built for us a special bamboo shelter, consisting of a bamboo floor a few feet off the ground and a roof of palm leaves. We then had supper consisting of Beer (recently captured) rice, bamboo sprouts, and barbecued steak. They freshly slaughtered a cow in our honor.

III. Equipment:

Nothing appears broken. By 7 PM they had brought all the containers to our "house".

IV. Weather:

Cooler than Poseh. We slept very comfortably on our silk sheets.

V. Radio:

We tried to make contact at 8:00 this morning (17 July) but was unsuccessful, but will try tonite on 6 o'clock sked. AGAS sent back word on their radio that we were all O.K.

VI. Conference with Mr. Hoe, Party Leader:

Had long conference with Hoe, this morning (17 July) The main discussion centered on our target and the French.

A. First the French. Mr. Hoe said if the guard had known Montfort was French they might have had him shot on the spot. Mr. Hoe personally likes many French but he says most of his soldiers don't. He says when the French retreated from Caobang they shot and gassed many political prisoners. Montfort's identity was given away at once because one of the Annamites recognized him having known him at Caobang.

He continued to say that the party had about 3,000 or more men under arms in Tonkin and that we would be helped everywhere we went-provided the French were not with us. I asked if he would agree to us sending in only the French officers and the Annamites at Poseh. He said no. He will welcome 10 million Americans, however, He further agreed that if the French agreed he would consent to our bringing in the Annamites now at Poseh. However, for several reasons it would be better not to:

1) He can give me here as many men as I need. He recommends not more than 100. Many are partially trained under a leader who was trained in guerilla warfare by the Navy in China.
2) These men here know the country better.
3) Security. Too many planes will attract the Japs.
4) Doubtful if the French will give them up.

He is willing that PHAC and LOGOS remain here, but since they are associated with the French prefers their return. He can furnish us with all the interpreters we need.

B. Second the target. He suggests a change in our target, to wit: operate on the Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, Cao Bang road instead of Hanoe-Langson road, for the following reasons:

1) The airforce has disrupted the traffic on Hanoi-Langson road.
2) It has lost its importance since Nanning was taken.
3) The Japs are in much greater force in that area.
4) The VML Party are not as strong or as well armed in that area.
5) The Japs are constantly using the Thai-Ngugen-Bac Kan. More so that Hanoi-Langson road.
6) Better area for training soldiers here.
7) The present area is completely controlled by the VML. No Japs penetrate.
8) This area is becoming static and from here we can take our men after they are trained and more south operate on the RR to Laokay and eventually on the RR line Hanoi-Saigon, which is much more vital and important, or if necessary take our trained men and operate on Hanoi-Langson road.

VII Recommendations:

I urgently recommend the following and request the following:

a) Eliminate all French and Annamese at Poseh.
b) Return Montfort, Phac & Logos to Poseh. This can be done soon as they have completed an L-5 strip and is going out Friday (20 July) by L-5.
c) Parachute all the rest of both teams including medical men here as soon as possible with all arms and about 1/3rd of the demo-

lition equipment.

d) Train the men here and then move north and operate near Cho Chu where we will get another DZ and drop the remainder of the supplies. We plan to set up a fairly permanent base there.

e) Recall and Langlois immediately to Poseh. If they have started out walking an effort must be made to recall them.

f) Send down OWI news photos and printing paper for local work. Would be a big help.

g) Forget the Communist Bogy. V.L is not Communist. Stands for freedom and reforms from French harshness. V.L would be willing to talk to some High Ranking French officer (General Sebotier, eg) and see what French would have to offer. If French go part way with them they might work with French--particularly, if Sebatier would come here. It might be done.

Equipment:

Try to get the following in addition to what we have: 6 Americans

1. 10 M-3's with Silencers (Good for Jap sentries & advance guards)
2. 4 mortars (60mm) with Ammo
3. Jungle boots, sneakers or sandals or cloth shoes for each American in addition to G-I shoes.
4. Blanket or light sleeping bag per man as the nights get cool.
5. All rations possible.
6. Plenty of cooking utensils.
7. 5 5-gal water cans. 10 folding canvas water buckets.
8. Plenty of D rations.
9. Plenty of mosquito repellent at lease 300 bottles.
10. Plenty of medical supplies especially for skin infection such as: (Some poisonous plants here) Frazer's solution, potassium permanganate, salicylic acid ointment.
11. Extra toothbrushes.
12. Plenty of entrenching tools and machettes. (10 of each)
13. Helmet per American.
14. Mosquito nets. (100)
15. 100 Green fatigue suits, small sizes, or camouflaged jungle suits and mechanics caps (no khaki clothes)
16. 1 pr khaki shorts per American.
17. 20 handie talkies (SCR 536) if possible-extremely useful for our sentries on mountain peaks. (spare batteries)
18. Candles - as many as possible.
19. Maps. If possible 5 complete sets of 1:100,000 for Tonkin (Indo-China edition 1937). Also some map (5 sets) to cover area south of Hanoi as far South as Hatinh rpt Hatinh (18-40, 106 and west 200 kilometers). Essential for partols and as gifts to party and military chiefs who need maps badly. Also map scale 1:1,000,000 (Hind 5000) sheet # NE 48, entitled "HUE".

20. Two (2) gas driven generators and two (2) loudspeakers for 694.
21. OWI News pictures and news leaflets in Annamese if possible.
22. Plenty of picture magazines (Life), books, newspapers.
23. Ammunition for present weapons they have--as much as possible of following:
    a) 9mm for sten
    b) .303 cal for Brens.
    c) 8mm for French rifles.
24. 25 to 50 .45 cal pistols.
25. Buy plenty of salt at Poseh. Natives very short of it.
26. Ten (at least) wire cutters and pole climbing spikes (To raise hell with telegraphic system)
27. Razor for prumier.
28. 1 small portable typewriter.
29. 10 watches for operational gifts to party and military leaders.
30. Several pounds printing paper for local papers and MO work. Need rough paper to take their ink. Size 24" x 12" approx.

ALLISON K. THOMAS
Major, Inf.
Leader, Team DEER

Kimlung
FIC
20 July 1945

TO : Major Wampler

FROM: Major Thomas

1. I am sending a complete written report to which I would like to have you read.

2. I am sending this back by who can verify all the facts.

3. The first fact is that all the French and Annamese at Poseh will have to be eliminated or we will have to go back. The VML Party is very strong here and one cannot work without them. They have a long list of grievances against the French. However, they would be willing to talk to a high ranking French official like General Sebatier, which we might be able to arrange, if the French are ready to grant certain concessions.

4. Request tentative change in target area. Would like to train our men here to do some work near Cho Chu and then move toward Hanoi-Langson Road. There is better security here for training and the party is strong here.

/s/ Major A.K. Thomas
0-1284241

APPENDIX I

List of grievances VML Party has aginst French:

1) Mr. Hoe, the chief, has had his wife and children taken away from him by the French and his lands burned.

2) The French on leaving Caobang, gassed and shot political prisoners.
3) Heavy taxes on growth and sale of food.
4) No congregation of more than 5 persons permitted without a license.
5) Practically forced sale of opium and alcohol on the population.
6) No freedom of press.
7) Outlaw of political parties.
8) Control and limitation of salt.

This is only a partial list

APPENDIX II

VML Party:

1) VML stands for Viet Minh League.
2) It is an amalgamation of all parties in 1940.
3) It is a large and strong following at least 3,000 armed men in Tonkin alone.
4) It stands for freedom and independence.
5) It is not Communist or Communist controlled or Communist led.

REPORT ON DEER MISSION---MAJOR A.K. THOMAS

CHAPTERS

I. Organization of mission at Kunming.

II. Preparation at Poseh

III. Preparation at Tsingsi

IV. Trip to Frontier and training of French

V. Preparation for jump and--jump into F.I.C.

VI. Life in F.I.C. from arrival of Advance Party to arrival of remainder of team and Capt. Holland.

VII. Training and selection of troops

VIII. Action taken after Jap surrender 15 August:

  A. March to Thai Nguyen
  B. Battle by Vietminh troops against Japs at Thai Nguyen

IX. Period of peace and rest after battle of Thai Nguyen.

X. Hanoi.

XI. Return to Kunming.

APPENDIX

I. Inventory of material captured, number of wounded at Thai Nguyen.

II. Paper on VIETMINH party.

HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
CHINA THEATER
APO 627

17 September 1945

SUBJECT: Report on Deer Mission.

TO : Chief, SO Branch, OSS/CT.

I. Organization at Kunming.

A. Personnel:
1) Major ALLISON K. THOMAS, 0-1284241, Team Leader
2) Lt. Rene DEFOURNEAUX, 0-887913, Asst. Team Leader
3) 1st Sgt William ZEILSKI, 35540859, Radio Operator
4) S/Sgt Lawrence VOGT, 32246498, Weapons Instructor
5) Sgt Aaron SQUIRES, 32056087, Field Photo.
6) Pfc Paul HOAGLAND, 42097161, Male Nurse.
7) Pfc Henry PRUNIER, 11071414, Annamese Interpreter
(Pfc Prunier joined us later at Tsingsi - 18 June)

B. Mission:

1) Our primary mission was to penetrate into French Indo-China by food and set up a base near the Hanoi-Langson road and railroad and to destroy, blow up andrender useless as much of the road and railroad as possible.

2) Secondary to this was the gathering of intelligence, there being the possibility that the mission might eventually be one of intelligence only.

3) We were to work with another team led by Capt. Holland. It was planned that after our arrival in FIC the two teams would split up each with approximately 50 guerillas apiece.

C. Briefing:

1) We were ably briefed by Lt. Scott of P.I. and by R&A, who furnished us with photographs and a complete log of the Hanoi-Langson road.

2) The Mapping Section was most helpful in giving us all maps requested.

3) Capt. Brown of S.I. gave us an excellent briefing on what was known of J.O.B. in F.I.C.

D. Supplies:

1) We were supplied with weapons and miscellaneous items for a 'standard' 50-men guerilla group including principally carbines, Tommies, Bazookas, & demolition equipment.

2) Honors here go to Capt. Tolman in R&A who was most helpful in his advice on the latest demolition gadgets.

II. Preparation at Poseh.

A. Our first leg of the journey was to proceed to Poseh to contact OSS Hq there under the command of who was to arrange details of the march into FIC, including the obtaining of the troops we were to have, etc.

B. On the 21st May, Sgt. Vogt, Sgt. Zeilski, left by truck and trailer for Poseh.

C. On the 26th of May Sgt Squires, Pfc Hoagland, and myself left by plane from Kunming and arrived at Poseh the same time as the others who had come by truck. That afternoon I had a conference with Capt. BABINEAU, Capt. HOLLAND, and Capt. BOGGS. It was decided that I would leave to Tsingsi (Chinghsi) tomorrow to contact Mr. Georges Wou who had two companies of border patrol troops placed at our disposition by the Chinese Marshall of the 4th War Zone. These two companies were to be trained by us and accompany us into FIC-in other words these troops were to be our guerillas.

III. Preparation for Mission at Tsingsi.

27 May: I left Poseh for Tsingsi by L-5 plane. Very interesting trip over the mountains. (The pilot got lost for 15 minutes and I thought I was over the FIC border already). I was met at the small air strip by Capt. Gwinn of the Chinese Combat Command (CCC) and Capt. Fish, Air Liaison Officer of the 69th Wing, both of whom had small detachments there.
(That night I was royally introduced to the town by having a "Gahm Bay" party at the Golden Gate Restaurant under the auspices of the "Dragon Lady" where I was introduced over wine cups to various Chinese officers of the 62nd Army)

28 May: I was ably briefed on the military situation by Capt. Gwinn of CCC who indicated there were very few Jap troops on the frontier and that only the towns were held in force. I held a long conference with Mr. Georges Wou-a most able and pleasant man. He had been educated in Europe and spoke French fluently and some English. He was a Chinese Civil Administrator in the nature of a Border Police and Customs Official who had two Battalions of troops-not regular army-under his command. In brief his troops were poorly armed and trained and would welcome new equipment. They would be ready to start training in a week and would be willing to cross the frontier. (Exact location of our target at this time was not revealed to Mr. Wou, nor was it ever revealed to him as subsequent events made a change in plans).

29 May: Informed by that Kunming was getting 100 Annamese troops and French officers for my use.

31 May: Remainder of my team and Capt. HOLLAND'S team left Poseh afoot for Tsingsi.

Attended graduation exercises for the NCO's of the 62nd Army. Gave a speech in which I stated we were fighting against the Japs and wished them good luck, etc. Met General Wang of the 62nd. This had nothing to do with my mission, but since I was the highest ranking American officer in town it was considered more or less obligatory to attend such functions. Their salute to Sun Yat Sun seemed sincere and was very impressive.

2 June: Made contact at Tsingsi with who I learned for the first time was an OSS representative, although I had not been told of his existence when I was at Kunming. As far as I could gather he was OSS supplied but was only 50% OSS furnishing information also to AGAS and was originally part of a nebulous mysterious GBT organization. was an extremely important contact. He was in excellent relationship with the Chinese, was respected by CCC and all concerned. His intelligence on Jap activities in FIC was of the best and rated the highest by all at Tsingsi. Also as far as I could discover, altho he was OSS supplied, OSS took his intelligence reports with a grain of salt. It was he who informed me that it would be impossible to work with the French in FIC. (This later turned out to be 100% true). His reports were sent to a Lt. Fenn at Kunming, whom I didn't know.

3-4 June: wires that Capt. EBAUGH will arrive to take over the Chinese troops of Mr. Wou and I will work with French and Annamite troops. Maj. Courthlac, French Army, from Kunming and arrived Tsingsi with plans to work with 100 French and annamite troops. The composition of the French troops was approximately as follows: 40 white French soldiers, 60 Annamese soldiers, 8 French officers. These troops were already at Tsingsi, having recently come from FIC. A "high level" conference was held, the following persons being present:

American Army	French Army
	Major Courthlac, from Kunming
Major THOMAS	Capt. Baudenon, Commanding French troops
	of the French Intelligence Mission at Tsingsi.

The following points were taken up:

1) Question of permission of French Troops to stay. said that the Chinese Marshall of the 4th War Zone had now given his permission for the French troops to remain 4 weeks more in the 4th War Zone, although they had recently been ordered out.

2) Question of clothing. The French stated that in addition to arms the French would have to have clothing. stated he would see what he could do about that.

3) Question of soldiers pay and food. Major Courthlac even approached the subject of our paying the French soldiers. "Le sol" as he called it. When I pointed out how preposterous this was the subject was dropped even hotter than a "hot potato." He also wanted us to furnish food and rations. This was likewise demurred to and rejected to toto by the American delegation. (Later it was agreed that the French might be able to Buy a certain amount of C rations from us).

4) Time Table for training and movement of troops into FIC:

7 June-Advance party consisting of some Americans and 1 French section move south to frontier to set up training camp.

9 June-Advance Party arrive training camp.

12 June-Main party join advance party and training in American arms would begin.

14 June-Advance Party consisting of American officers and radio with one small French squad leave by foot for Advance Base in FIC

somewhere south of Pho Binh Gia.
24 June-Advance Party arrive Advance Base FIC.
26 June-Training of main body end.
28 June-Main body begin march to FIC
10 July-Main body join Advance party at Advance Base.
1 Aug -Commence demolition action against target, to wit: Hanoi-Langson road.

5) Parachuting of supplies. It was decided that what was needed for training and march would be parachuted at training base from plane coming from Poseh, the remainder to be parachuted at our Advance Base "behind the lines" in FIC.

7 June: The rest of my team and HOLLAND's team arrived Tsingsi after 7 days march from Poseh. They encountered several difficulties with the mountains and in getting coolies to transport our supplies, some of which were being brought down to start training the Chinese troops.

10 June: The French say they are discourgged because no American equipment yet and they only have enough money for 15 more days. Capt. Ebaugh arrived with his team.

11 June: Things break. [redacted] wires he can get clothes for French. French say they will "feed" themselves and money has arrived for them. EBAUGH takes over the border patrol troops of M. Wou relieving me of that worry.

12 June: Mr. Wou Okehs the training area for our French troops at Onning, a small village near the frontier, a few kilometers west of Titiou. The French had informed me that this was secure from Jap eyes and large enough for training purposes.

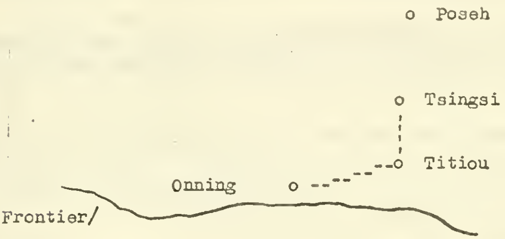
IV. Trip to Frontier and training of French.

13 June: Americans with 20 French leave afoot for Onning.
I remain at Tsingsi to try and arrange for guides for our entry into FIC with [redacted] I was extremely anxious for native guides as I thought this was the only practicable way to enter FIC safely. [redacted] said he could easily arrange same through his contact with [redacted] (GBT-AGAS Man) who was now in central Tonkin. Received following wire from [redacted] on the subject: "PATTI sent wire 11 June to [redacted] authorizing use of GBT for guides." On again approaching [redacted] he informed me that apparently OSS and his Hq. were having difficulties and that he had been informed exactly the contrary. This was extremely disheartening to myself as well as [redacted] We could not understand why since we could get along so well in the field why people in Kunming couldn't do likewise. So I had to go ahead and proceed without guides, when same was readily available. Also received following wire from [redacted] quote: "Have two Annamite interpreters and Lt. Stewart, S.I. with Radio and Capt. Popper of S & T. They will bring and train intelligence." unquote.

14 June: Main body of French left for Onning.

15 June: Received following wire from HOLLAND now at Onning:
"Area unsuitable. No suitable drop ground. Jap activities too close. Hold Main Body Tsingsi."

16 June: Left Tsingsi with Capt. Baudenon "on horse full speed ahead" for Onning. Yes, the French had given us a bad steer in selecting Onning. Not sufficient food or quarters here for 100 men and no suitable drop ground. I issued order for everyone to move to Titiou.



17 June: Made recce at Titiou and found suitable DZ and place for quarters and training.

18 June: Received following message from "Wire from Kunming orders no issuing supplies or equipment to French pending solution of difficulties. Believe they suspect doublecross--Let you know further developments." Also received message by courier to the effect that had been ordered to Kunming. Decided to leave for Poseh to see what the French trouble was and attempt to contact for latest intelligence on FIC as he was my only source of information on the subject. On the road to Tsingsi from Titiou met French rear party. Comming down with them were Capt. Popper and Pfc Prunier. Capt. Popper then informed me that he wasn't bringing 10 Annamites with him but that he was to train 10 Annamites for intelligence that had already been selected for him. It was the first time I had heard about that. (This later turned out to be a sore point with the French who hadn't been told of it either and they couldn't understand why an American should train their men in intelligence for FIC when they had just come out of there. Anyhow they let POPPER go ahead and select and train 10 men, and in spite of French opposition, he did a very creditable job.)

19 June: At Tsingsi had left the following message for me which had come to him from "Please advise Thomas if he enters FIC with French he will find whole population against them and will get no food, will also be sniped at as natives hate French." This verified an earlier message which stated that a French-American mission would not at all be welcome. I had previously discussed the point with and French officers and the French Consul at Tsingsi. They also assured me that many times the natives had helped the French in FIC-in fact had helped many escape from the Japs, that the majority of the population was pro-French, and that the mission was sure to succeed especially with American Officers present and using American cover. (This later proved partly true, partly false. The natives of FIC did help the French on humanitarian principles escape, but were anything but pro-French).

I had my doubts about the matter and so did Major REVOL of the French Mission at Tsingsi (he was the only Frenchman who did) who stated that unless we had an agreement with the VIETMINH party, permitting the French to enter, it was hopeless. (Events later proved this to be true). (Incidentally, the first time I had every heard of the VIETMINH was from the French at Tsingsi).

19 June:-26 June: Awaiting OK to supply French.
26 June: OK came from Hq authorizing the issuing of supplies to the French. Holland started his training and continued training the French with Popper and until 3 July.

28 June: At Poseh I received the news that Hq had approved a plan to jump in. Everybody now happy. Apparently honors go to AGAS for furnishing the Drop Zone.
2 July: returned from Kunming. Plans finally approved for jump. All French & Americans ordered to Poseh for jump training.

3 July: I returned to Tsingsi by L-5.

4-6 July: Americans flew by L-5 from Tsingsi to Poseh. I made arrangements through Chinese authorities permitting the French to walk to Poseh. Lt. Stewart of SI was granted emergency leave and also flew to Poseh. His radio operator informed me that he was being replaced by a Lt. Barnett. However, this Lt. never arrived.

V. Preparation for Jump and Jump into FIC.

7 July: I returned to Poseh.
7-15 July: Preparations were made and elementary jump training was given to all "non-jumpers" by BABINEAU, and WHALLAN. In the meantime received a message from Hq which in turn came from AGAS, giving the DZ coordinates, stating that there were about 3,000 armed guerillas in Tonkin, and that a combined French-American mission would not be welcome. I again discussed the matter with and since there was no directive from Kunming on the subject, I decided to jump in as Advance Party with one French officer who would report back himself to the rest of the French on the subject. Capt. Baudenon and the rest of the French officers were in accord with this plan.
16 July: The following personnel made themselves ready for the jump:
Major THOMAS   Lt. MONTFORT-French Army
Sgt. ZEILSKI   Sgt. LOGOS -French-Annamite
Pfc. PRUINIER   Sgt. PHAC -Annamite

Flew over the DZ in the morning but panels not out. Flew over again in the afternoon. Panels were out and out we went. No one hurt. All packages OK, but MONTFORT, ZEILSKI and I landed in trees.
Received cordially on the ground by of AGAS. Greeted by 200 armed guards of the Vietminh party. I gave a little speech to them-considered obligatory-and Mr. Lee, a Party Leader, was my interpreter. A very impressive reception committee. We were then led through the forest pathh, then under a bamboo archway with the sign in English above"Welcome to our American Friends" and then conducted to our quarters which had been recently built for us. It consisted of a clean typical Tonkin bamboo house, which turned

out to be very comfortable. We were then introduced to Mr. Hoo, Party Leader, who welcomed us and presented us with a fatted calf and some Hanoi beer for our supper. We spent the night peacefully, happy that at last we had arrived.

VI. Life in FIC from arrival of Advance Party to arrival of remainder of team.

17 July: Our camp was located on the side of a hill in a bamboo forest at the end of Kimlung Gorge about 1 kilo from the small village of Kimlung. Kimlung itself is located 27 kilos almost due east of Tuyen Quang and about 47 kilos northwest of Thai Nguyeh, the provincial capital. The military coordinates on the FIC map, scale 1:100,000, are: Sheet #26 (West), 17.5-45.5.

We were a few yards from the hut of Mr. Hoo, Vietminh Party Chief and also a few yards from of AGAS. Immedietely to the west of us unrolled our drop zone which consisted of a flat valley of rice paddies surrounded by forested hills.

The identity of Mr. C.M. Hoo, recognized Vietminh Party Leader, was a mystery to us. Hoo, was his code name. Later, when he became president of the Provisional Government of Vietminh (Indo-China) at Hanoi, he divulged his real name which is Ho Chi Minh.

Held long conference with Mr. Hoo, (Ho Chi Minh), on the subject of the French. He stated that the Vietminh Party, or League, was an amalgamation of all political parties organized for the sole purpose of ousting all foreign powers and was working for the liberty and complete independence of Indo-China. It had no political ideas beyond that as its members came from all political groups. After liberty had been achieved, then they would worry about politics. He definitely tabooed the idea that the party was communistic. He stated that at least 85% of the people of Tonkin were members or sympathetic with its aims. It would obviously be to the most ordinary observer that the peasants didn't know what the word communism or socialism meant-but they did understand liberty and independence.

Consequently, Mr. Hoo made it very clear to me that it would be impossible for Lt. Montfort, the French Officer, to stay, nor would any more French be welcome. He pointed out many grievances his people had against the French and many of his people hated them worse than the Japs. In fact, everyone talked against the Jap Fascists and French Fascists with equal fervor. He said he would welcome a million American soldiers to come in but not any French even though they were soldiers and insisted that they were here to fight Japs only, because as Mr. Hoo maintained it would only be an opening wedge for them. He indicated he would gladely escort Lt. Montfort safely back to the frontier as he had done many other Frenchmen. It was agreed that I would notify my Hq on the subject and Lt. Montfort would return soonest, either by L-5 or afoot. Lt. Montfort was made award of the situation and cabled the same news to the French at Poseh. He was most anxious to return to Kunming to explain the entire situation, inasmuch as Mr. Hoo welcomed a talk with any high ranking French official, especially on the subject of DeGAULLE's proclamation concerning FIC which contained some very vague points.

As to Sgt. LOGOS and Sgt. PHAC, Mr. Hoo consented to their staying on, however doubted if the French would release them. This turned out to be the case.

18 July: Made radio contact with Poseh. Informed on French question and he couldn't understand why, saying the French here were fine chaps-to which I heartedly agreed. Eventually, however it sunk through and the French at Poseh

were eliminated. However, before they were eliminated it was actually decided that Capt. Holland and the French would jump blind near the original target area. I wired back that this would be nothing but suicide and after Holland and Capt. Baudenon flew over the target area they came to the same conclusion.

19 July: Had long conference with and Mr. HOO re target area. They felt it best that we train our troops here, since the VIETMINH LEAGUE was very strong here and since he could easily furnish immediately 100 guerillas and we could start operating on the Thai-Nguyen-Backan road (Colonial Route #3). When our troops were "in the groove" we could then move to the more dangerous area and operate on the LANGSON-HANOI road.

Hoo stated he could receive any number of SO teams, which could in time and with preparation be sent anywhere even as far south as SAIGON.

I wired same to My change for a new temporary target was approved and Holland was to jump to me and start to the original target area slowly and begin the ground work there. I cabled back that that was the only way it could work and was glad that POSEH had finally seen the light.

20 July: Spent all day at L-5 strip at Thanh-La (prepared by of AGAS) waiting for plane which was to take to kunming. Sent complete written report to Hq.

23-24 July: Took trip with 5 guards to observe road Thai Nguyen-Tuyen Quang. No target here has Japs had not used road in last month.

25 July: Mr. Hoo, Party Chief, again expressed desire to talk with high French official either at Kunming or here. I forwarded this request to Poseh and forwarded same to AGAS Hq at KUNMING.

27-29 July: Took trip with Prunier and 6 guards to make Recce of Colonial Route #3. Made personal reconnaissance of Jap held fort at Cho Chu, where I had the pleasure of seeing 10 Japs at the fort-through the telescope. Received message by courier from that Holland was about to arrive so cancelled rest of trip and returned to Kimlung. (Cho Chu once the Japs were out would have made an excellent base for our attack on the road).

30 July: Arrived back at Kimlung. Greeted by Capt. Holland and remainder of my team who had all parachuted successfully yesterday.

31 July: Holland, Stoyka, and left with 30 guards for area south of Pho Binh Gia, to set up advance base there. Lt. Montfort, Sgt Logos, Sgt Phac left to join French "Refugees" at a nearby village. These refugees had been in a Jap concentration camp at Tam Dao but the VIETMINH troops attacked the camp (suffered casualties in so doing) and then released the French and now were taking care of them. of AGAS was arranging Red Cross supplies for them and Montfort was going to lead-those who could walk-out of FIC by foot, and the women and children were to fly out by L-5.

31 July: Was informed by Poseh that Capt. Singlaub and team was to drop to me at once. I wired back that this was impossible, without advance notice, because it takes time to arrange quarters and get food, as that is a very difficult problem here. Furthermore, Singlaub would be welcome here by Hq would have to select another target (I indicated what I thought would be a good one) as the food problem would not permit two separate guerilla teams of 100 men each in the same area. The best plan on Singlaub I felt would be for him to drop to Holland and set up a base in that area inasmuch as that target was so much more important. However, he could also drop to me and then walk to his selected area.

VII. Training and selection of troops.

1-6 Aug: Mr. Hoo began rounding up 200 hundred soldiers for us out of which we were to pick the best 100. Plans were made for us to move 3 or 4 kilos away to a new location which would be better for a training area, inasmuch as it had already been used as a school by the VML.

7 Aug: Moved to new location.

9 Aug: Started first day of training. Training in earnest to make up for lost time from 5:30 AM to 5 PM.

10 Aug: Received our last parachute cargo drop of 22 chutes. Received message from Poseh stating that Ebaugh had captured in FIC with his Chinese troops two pro-Jap villages. This was disheartening news as it was obvious Ebaugh was not in friendly contact the VIETMINH and that the VIETMINH were only trying to keep out the Chinese who in the past had acted as bandits and robbers in FIC. To say that in FIC there are any pro-Jap villages-well, nothing could be farther from the truth. In reference to this lamentable state of affairs I wired the following to Poseh: "Please forward following to Ebaugh. VIETMINH party chief here says he has no objections to Chinese fighting in FIC under American control if they don't act like bandits. Chief here sent message by courier to Party Chief CAOBANG area to contact Ebaugh and enter into amicable relations." I had earlier sent to Poseh the following message for Eabugh, "Tell Ebaugh Party here willing to cooperate with Chinese. Will be invaluable in furnishing guides. No doubt can pull coordinated attacks. Tell Ebaugh Chinese fears that party communistic unfounded".

10-14 Aug: Training continuing at high speed in carbines, M-1's, Tommyguns, Bazookas, LMG's, Brens, Mortars and Grenades. Received news that Jap surrender imminent.

VIII. Action taken after Jap surrender 15 August.

A. March to Thai Nguyen:

15 Aug: Decided after conference with party leaders that in view of Jap surrender it was now the opportune time to wind up the training and hit the road in the general direction of Thai Nguyen and see what could be done in the way of "action." Troops were ordered to get ready to leave the next morning. Americans spent the day packing and getting ready to break camp. As far as the training of our troops was concerned it was not finished. What we had done had been done fast and not all subjects by any means had been covered. However, the

boys picked it up fast, had been eager to learn and made up for it in spirit what they still lacked in training.

16 Aug: When the news was received that Jap surrender was probable I sent a wire to Poseh stating that we might be able to obtain the surrender of all Jap troops in our area, that we would follow terms of Geneva convention, and eventually turn all Jap prisoners and arms we might get over to the proper authorities, following the Allied Surrender negotiations with the Japs.

The answer to this was that as far as we were concerned the war was over and under no circumstances were we to accept any Jap surrenders. This was indeed extremely disheartening to me as we all felt that we had risked our lives in coming here and now when the going was to be easy we were not allowed to get in on the gravy.

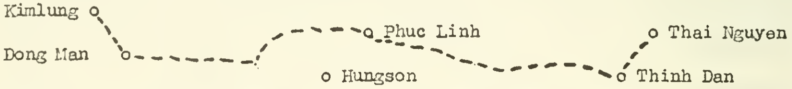
However, since there was no point any longer in staying in the deep dark mosquito bitten forests anymore we broke camp and left with the soldiers that morning at 11:30 AM. Our intention was to move at least as far as Thai Nguyen which was a fairly good size town and set up more comfortable quarters there and await developments. From this point on we received no official news on the occupation of FIC by the Allies. We learned through AGAS that probably the Chinese would occupy the northern half of FIC and the British the Southern half.

On leaving Kimlung I had a final conference with Mr. Hoo who indicated to me he would like me to stay in FIC as long as possible. I replied that that was a question for my C.O. in Kunming, and doubted if it would be possible inasmuch as his party was not recognized nor was his country independent as yet.

Mr. Hoo had called a conference of all party leaders and delegates at Kimlung from all over Tonkin to discuss their future policy, and they were all present to see the troops off.

Arrived late at night at the village of Dong Man.

17 Aug: Second day of march. Stayed all night at Phuc Linh not far from Hungson. Marched on main road part of the way and we saw why the Japs had not used the road. The guerillas had torn up the bridges, dug craters, and placed large trees across the road in strategic places.



18 Aug: A section of the troops made a recce of Hungson. About 20 Japs still at the post, but Party leader, Mr. Van, decided that there was not much point in waisting a day here in trying to attack it but go on for bigger game at Tahi Nguyen, which was the provincial capital. The Americans and the remaining troops in the meantime headed for the village of Thinh Dan, a few kilos south of Thai Nguyen.

19 Aug: All troops to-gether again and all moved a little closer to Thai Nguyen. The Party leaders made plans to enter the town at 4 AM in the morning, surround the post, occupy strategic spots, demand the surrender of the "Guarde Indigene" from the Provincial Governor and then issue a surrender ultimatum to the Japs in the name of the VIETMINH LEAGUE.

A group of VIETMINH party members came out from town and drew up a plan of the town showing Jap positions. They said there were about 30 to 40 Japs in the post and none in the town. The Japs had a kitchen in town but used it only in the daytime. This later proved false and it turned out there were small detachments of Japs in four different buildings throughout the town.

We received a message from Poseh stating we were to sit tight and not go to Hanoi without orders from Hq. This again was stunning news. We could not understand this. If Hanoi was safe to enter and we being Americans we couldn't see the point but guessed that Hq. thought we would not be strictly neutral inasmuch as we worked for a few weeks with the VIETMINH. However, conversely considering everything Hq. Hadn't been neutral as far as these people were concerned when we issued arms to the French. Of course, the counter argument and quite plausible one was that the French were our Allies and the VIETMINH party was a secret party working against the French whose existence was not recognized by any power. Another point we thought might have something to do with it was that since Gen'l MacArthur was in charge of sureender negotiations no OSS personnel were allowed to proceed to Hanoi. (This turned out to be erroneous because we later learned through the VIETMINH that an ALLIED mission of Inquiry headed by a Capt. Patti had arrived in Hanoi. Poseh, on questioning, informed us that this was our own Capt. PATTI of OSS).

B. Battle by VIETMINH troops against Japs at Thai Nguyen.

20 Aug: From 3 AM to 4AM the troops slowly moved in the darkness to occupy the town. The Americans were in the 3rd Echelon and were escorted to a safe house on the outskirts of town on the opposite side of the Jap Post, where they spent the next few days peacefully waiting for the battle between the Japs and VIETMINH to end. I issued an order to them "to stay put" inasmuch as the war was over there was no point in their going out in the streets to get their fingers burned and furthermore Poseh had issued orders to "cease operations".

I was kept informed of what was happening at all times by a party liaison man.

About 6:30 AM news was received that the Provincial Governor had capitulated and turned over his 160 troops of the "Guard Indigene" without firing a shot. The VIETMINH thus obtained immediately many rifles, ammunition, clothing, etc.

The Provincial Governor was then persuaded to proceed with a white flag with a civilian who spoke Japanese past the various Jap positions. In a few minutes everyone was happy because he came back with a Jap civilian. Immediately a surrender ultimatum was written which stated that Japan had surrendered, that it was useless to continue, and that the terms of the Geneva convention would be followed. The Jap civilian then proceeded everywhere with it but the Japs refused to surrender. As a result of the Jap refusal firing started on both sides and continued sporadically the rest of the day and night.

21 Aug: The VIETMINH decided to launch a small attack to show the Japs how strong they were. About 3 PM "all hell" broke loose. The VIETMINH fired for about 10 minutes with French rifles, French machine guns, Jap machine guns (that had been captured in previous engagements), British stens and brens (which the British had parachuted to the French here), grenades and weapons which we had given them which included bazookas, M-1s, and HE Anti-tank grenades. However, the Japs were well installed in their concrete fortifications and it is doubtful if any were even wounded at this time. But the townspeople were duly impressed by the "attack".

A woman partly Chinese, partly Japanese, was discovered hiding in town and she agreed to carry a white flag to the Jap post with the "paper". The "paper" was toned down quite a bit. Instead of demanding unconditional surrender it merely stated that it was useless for both sides to continue the struggle and lets have a person to person talk on the matter. The young lady approached the gate of the Post and shouted in Japanese but no one came to meet her. Finally she was instructed by a far off Japanese voice to throw the paper over the wall. She did this and immediately a Jap soldier fired from the blockhouse. She had been accompanied by another Japanese woman civilian who was wounded in the arm. The VIETMINH administered first aid to this Japanese woman and took her to the local hospital.

22 Aug: Firing continued throughout the town. The Japs started firing a 50mm mortar and several civilians were wounded.

23 Aug: The VIETMINH made an attack on the "Villa Gautier" where the Jap Secret police were living. They entered the house but discovered the 3 or 4 Japs had evacuated during the night. However, the prizes of war were considerable, consisting in part of guns, documents, gasoline, and several cases of TNT (French).
The VIETMINH also made an attack on the Jap stables near the post and released 8 Jap horses.

24 Aug: Once more the VIETMINH tried to get the Japs to talk. Another Jap civilian woman came out of hiding. (It appears there had been about 5 Jap civilians in town who had been connected with exploiting the local mines). She agreed to take the message with a white flag. She jumped over the wall of the Jap post and was never seen or heard of again.

25 Aug: In the morning the VIETMINH made an attack against another building in town where two Japs were holding out. The Japs here had also evacuated the night before. How they got past the guards is still a mystery. The VIETMINH "took back" from the Japs here considerable quantities of rice, salt, sugar, etc. (See Appendix for complete list of material). In the afternoon, success at last. Another Jap male civilian agreed to go again with a white flag and the "paper". Here is a translation of the document: "We have just received an order from our Supreme Council to cease firing. There has been at Hanoi negotiations between the VIETMINH authorities and the Japanese authorities. We have ordered our soldiers to cease firing. We hope that you will also cease fire. If you fire we shall be obliged to defend ourselves, and you will be charged with the responsibility of this useless carnage before the Allied Mission. The Allied Mission is now actually at Hanoi."
He first went to the Jap kitchen where 4 Japs were located. They gave in. Then he went with two Japs from the kitchen to the Jap "Gendarmerie" where it was discovered the Japs had evacuated the previous night. Then all 3 went to the Jap Garrison and in five minutes the Jap Captain sent an answer back that he was willing to cease fire if the VIETMINH did likewise. A rendez-vous was set and the Jap Captain had a conference with the VIETMINH chief. It was agreed that firing would cease, that the Japs would keep their arms but would be restricted to the confines of their post, and the VIETMINH would send food to them. (Later even this was relaxed and the Japs were allowed to circulate in town without arms where they were surprised to find seven equally surprised Americans out strolling the streets on a shopping and picture taking tour.)

26 Aug: Day of final liberation and celebration for the town. People came out on the streets again. Almost every building had a VIETMINH flag waving. (The VIETMINH flag is red with a yellow star in the center). Parades were held, and the newly organized municipal government got under way.

IX. Period of peace and rest after the battle of Thai Nguyen.

27 Aug - 9 Sept: During this period the Americans were comfortably housed in the former Provincial Governor's quarters, well-fed and cared for by the VIETMINH. The time was spent in getting fat, getting a sun-tan, visiting the city, and waiting for permission to go to Hanoi to get a plane for Kunming and home.

So now I can take time out here to describe somewhat our life in FIC from the mundane point of view.

Actually the countryside of Tonkin is very beautiful. It is mountainous with large forests. In every valley are the rice paddies where the people eke out a meager living. Their rice diet is supplemented by a few chickens, pigs, bamboo sprouts, "jungle" tea, taroo (somewhat like the potatoe), a few forest fruits, some bananas and farther south some pineapples and grapefruit. Their diet is extremely deficient which is evident by the distended bellies of their children.

The peasants in general in Tonkin are extremely bad off. They have few clothes. What they do have consists of patched over rags and the children run around naked. But they are all hard working and honest. The people are principally of three types-Annamese, Tho, and Man. They all speak different languages or dialects. The Tho are strongly VIETMINH in sentiment. The Man hill tribes are ancient.peoples who live in the very remote and isolated places. Their dress is colorful. The women wear blue and always wear silver and copper coins and colorful beads. They are also VIETMINH in political sentiment.

The VIETMINH did everything to make our stay as pleasant as possible for us. They gave us their best food and we seldom went without a chicken or a duck or meat of some kind to go along with our rice. They would go for miles to obtain bananas for us. At every village we entered on our various trips the whole population would turn out to welcome us and present to us the "key to the village" as it were. The village guard would render a salute with their ancient arms. The village headman would give us a little speech of welcome and present us with gifts of bananas, eggs, or flowers. Then the children in the group would sing a native song or two and then everyone would join in and sing a VIETMINH song of independence and liberty. The scenes were invariably impressive and "touching" to all the Americans as we knew they were expressing what was in their hearts and offering to us the best gifts they had.

X. Hanoi.

9 Sept - 16 Sept: Our team left by foot, car, and boat and arrived at Hanoi about 4 PM. We obtained quarters through the VIETMINH party, which was authorized by the PATTI MISSION.

We spent the time from 9 Sept to 16 Sept. seeing the city, buying souvenirs, saying good-bye to our VIETMINH friends, and making arrangements to return to Kunming. Hanoi was an extremely festive city for everyone except the French.

VIETMINH flags were flying from almost every house. Banners were stretched across the streets with various "slogans" in Annamese, English, Chinese, Russian, Indian, etc. French was noticeably absent.

Some of the slogans seen everywhere were as follows: "Welcome Allies", "Welcome Peace Commission", "Down with French Imperialism"., "Lets kick out French Imperialism", "Independence or Death", "2,000,000 people died under French domination", "VIETMINH for the VIETAMESE".

The VIETMINH party at Hanoi had set up a Provisional Government and issued a"Declaration of Independence".

Our friend of the forest, Mr. C.M. Hoo, now Mr. Ho Chi Minh, was President of the Provisional Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Another friend of the forest, Mr. Van, now Vo Nguyen Giap became Minister of Interior. Party members were appointed cabinet members. The new government appears to be enthusiastically supported by the majority of the population in every province of Indo-China. The new government was given strength by the resignation and abdication of Bao Dao, former puppet Emperor, who offered his services as friend and adviser.

The people know the French intend to come back but they keep saying if they come back with arms they will fight to the death.

The story of our experiences in Indo-China is melodramatic in the following sense. On 16 July we were living in the forests of Indo-China with the Chief of the VIETMINH party. Less than two months later, this same chief had become President of the new Provisional Government and was installed in the former home of the French "Resident Superior" in Hanoi.

XI. Return to Kunming.

On 16 Sept 1945 our team returned by plane to Kunming, China.

ALLISON K. THOMAS
Major, Infantry
Commanding Team DEER

THE VIETMINH PARTY OR LEAGUE

Major A.K. Thomas, OSS

1. Foundation
2. Organization
3. Personnel
4. Strength
5. Purpose and Policies
6. Foreign relations
7. Propaganda
8. Guerilla Warfare
9. Formation of Government after Jap Surrender

(The material in this report was obtained during a two months stay in French Indo-China - 16 July to 16 September 1945. It was obtained mostly from Party leaders and hence may be biased and not all of it is verified. Where the material was obtained, by personal observation of the writer, it can be ascertained from the text)

THE VIETMINH PARTY OR LEAGUE

I. FOUNDATION

The Vietminh League (or Indo Chinese Peoples Independence Confederation) was organized in 1936. In 1940 it became an amalgamation of all then existing parties, however, the nucleus of each party remained.

II. ORGANIZATION

Inasmuch as the party was necessarily secret and underground the exact organization and composition was necessarily nebleous. Leaders were constantly changing.

In general, ghe organization at the top is clear. This consisted of a democratic council of 9 men. The Council consisted of two delegates from Tonkin, two from Annam, two from Cochin-China, two from Cambodia, and one from Laos.

III. PERSONNEL

The two most important party members that we came in contact with were Mr. C.M. Hoo (real name: Ho Chi Minh) and Mr. Van (real name: Vo Nguyen Giap). These two were constantly near us in the two months we were in F.I.C.

Mr. Hoo later became President of the Provisional Government and Mr. Van became Minister of Interior.

Both are extremely sincere and able and believe 100% in the independence of F.I.C. They have endured extreme hardships in the forests of F.I.C. Both have leftist sympathies and according to Capt. Patti, S.I., Mr. Hoo is an outright Communist.

IV. STRENGTH

According to party leaders, VML represents at least 85% of the population of Annam, Cochin,-China, Tonkin, and Cambodia. This figure includes sympathizers as well as members.

It was conservatively estimated that in Tonkin there were approximately 3,000 armed guerillas. This figure did not include village guards.

It is said that the reason for the great strength of VML in comparison to other parties was that it appealed to the people en masse, the peasants and the depressed. Whereas, other parties worked only among the intellectual groups.

V. PURPOSE AND POLICIES

A. Platform.

Party leaders state that its main platform is the complete independence and liberty of their country. They had stood for French and Jap grievances long enough and were ready for independence.

However, they were realistic to state that they knew the French would return and that the best they could hope for the present was reform, but they insisted on their independence in a fairly short period of years-this ran all the way from 5 to 15 years.

The leaders also stated and admitted that they would need outside technical help if independence were achieved. They especially welcomed the help America might give in the way of technicians.

B. Politics.

As far as politics-outside of independence-was concerned nothing was mentioned. Their aim was liberty, they said, after that they would discuss political questions.

They were vehement in their denial that the Party was communistic. This was pure propaganda, they said, put out by the French and Chinese to discredit their party.

It was obvious, it was siad, to the most casual observer that the ordinary uneducated peasant who was 100% Vietminh, had never heard of the word communism or knew what it meant.

The leaders made an analogy to the USA at the time it was seeking independence. There were no parties but only patriots. Pòlitics came later.

I later learned that many of the party leaders, including Mr. Hoo and Mr. Van had communistic sympathies. If not out-right communists they were definitely leftists. Many other leaders believe in some form of socialism.

However, all parties and persons, including industrialists are now united for independence. Politics come later, they say.

VI. FOREIGN RELATIONS

There was no official representative of the party either at Kunming or Chungking. This is obvious inasmuch as the party was recognized by no one, ie by no foreign power. However, there were Annamese people at these cities who were party members.

A. French. The Vietminh campaigned against both the Japs and French, altho realiaed that the Jap was a greater danger while he was here and carried on active warfare against him. However, they did not shoot any French but to the contrary only kept them under surveillance and escorted many of them to safety in China. They know France is a great country-but they have no respect for its colonial policy. However, to show to the world they were not bandits but actually humanitarians they followed the principle of taking care of them-at least for the moment. The best example of helping the French was at Tam Dao. The Japs had a concentration camp there for about 20 French, including men, women and children. The Vietminh launched an attack, suffered some losses, but liberated all the French and proceeded to take care of them. However, that does not mean they are pro-French. To the contrary they are anti-French. But the above acts show they follow principles of justice.

The grievances against the French are specific and many. As atated to me here are some in part:

1. More than 5 persons couldn't assemble without a permit.
2. High taxes on land, matches, head taxes, etc.
3. Private schools forbidden.
4. Hard or impossible to get certain gov't administrative posts or get in big business.
5. If rice is short, people starve and the French hogs get the rice. Several million people starved recently it was said because of French hoarding the rice-and it all spoiled.
6. A price was put on the head of political leaders. So many piastres and so much salt offered as a reward.
7. They would buy salt-demanding a certain quantify, and if same was not reached, would confiscate all ot it. They would buy it for say 30 sous and sell it back the same amount for 3 piastres.
8. Foreed sale of opium and alcohol. If a magistrate didn't buy his quota, the village committee was arested. Opium consumption was encouraged by propaganda.
9. Forbade even mandarins and landlords to have arms.
10. Forbade all political parties and trade unions. Leaders put in jail.
11. Ration coupons necessary for clothas. French had special "A" coupons. Could get more and sell their surplus at a profit.
12. Taxes on growing food and its sale.
13. Inhuman practices:
    eg-Shooting and gassing of political prisoners at Caobang.
    3rd degree practices of the Surete.
14. Control and limitation of salt.
15. No freedom of the press.
16. Poor type of French colonial administrator. Morale, etc. bad. Emperor of Annam and King of Cambodia merely stooges and puppets.
17. French gave 8 girls for the pleasure of Jap mayor at Hanoi. (French say they were forced to do it.)

The Party leaders were at all times willing to talk to French leaders on questions of reforms and on questions concerning General DeGaulle's proclamation for FIC, which they claimed to be vague. As evidence of their good faith in this regard they were willing to fly to Kunming for this purpose rather than insist that the French come here. AGAS was used as intermédiary. The Party Chief was actually scheduled to go to Kunming when the surrender of the Japs was announced.

B. Chinese. The relations with the Chinese have not been pleasant. For example, the party chief Mr. C.M. Hoo was arrested in China held without a trial and charged with being a Jap spy, so it was stated by Hoo. Probably the truth was that he was arrested because of his leftist sympathies.

The Chinese have repeatedly accused the VML as being bandits and that the party is communistic.

The Chinese have sponsored an Annamite Party of its own which it claims to be the true party.

Chinese troops or irregulars have crossed the frontier and committed acts of banditry.

Following are purported to be some excerpts of letters sent to the VML by the Chinese sponsored party:

"Friend we received an order from the commander in chief (that means General Chang Fai Kwei-translator) to come and work in Indo-China. Because comrades of different localities not yet united, we cannot execute that order. We write this letter to tell you, either your group shall join our group to work together, or you stick to communism. In the latter case, when our army enters Indo-China, we will destroy you, then it will be too late for you to repent. In 24 hours you must come to see us to talk things over.

signed: The Peoples Revolutionary Party of Indo-China
21/5/45 Commander of the First Tai-Toi of the First Chitoil
Luu Ping Nan"

****

"Our army received orders to come here to hold the Revolutionary League organize a revolutionary government, and to destroy the Japs. Please, tell the population of the villages to come home. If they keep on hiding in the mountains they will be punished as bandits.

8 July, 1945 signed: Liang kien Thoong
Kham Loong Pan

****

"Our army received orders to station in the different districts of Langson, in order to destroy bandit parties, and to keep peace and order. We hope the local population cooperates with us to protect their life and to keep peace and order in their localities.

July signed: People Rev. Army of Indo-China
First Chitoi.
Commander Lee ing Khe.
2nd Comm. Liang ting Lin"

****

"The aim of our army is to help the national revolution of Indo-China and to destroy bandit parties in different places of that country. We learn that there are different parties making agitation and propaganda for false doctrine, contrary to the doctrine of the Revolutionary League of Indo-China.

But we will pardon these parties if they surrender to us, obey the doctrine of our party. We, the commanders will be generous and pardon the past. From the day of this proclamation, all parties must send representatives to our Hq. to ask for surrender. Otherwise we shall send big army to destroy them pitilessly.

signed: People Rev. Army of Indo-China.
First Chitoi.
Commander Lee ing Khe.
2nd Comm. Liang Ting lin."

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General Siao Wan, one of the 4th War Zone chiefs, vice chairman of the Wai-tsu-su (Foreign affairs section, Marshall Chiang fa Kwei being the chairman), and a xrepresentative of Marchal Chiang fa Kwei to lead the Revolutionary League of Indo China wrote in one of his letters to Mr. C.M. Hoo Vietminh Party Chief as follows:

"1. The VML uses terroristic policies and is communist.

2. VML uses "diehard and lying policies" vis-a-vis friendly nation which sympathizes with Indo-Chinese revolution; this is taunting Indo-Chinese revolution, taunting the friendly nation.

3. VML doesn't fight the Japs, but fights China and Indo-Chinese People.

4. VML leaders have no intelligence, no good attitude, no confidence. They always show narrow, reactionary, incapable, irresponsible. Everywhere people despise them. They don't get any social position, to say nothing of international position..."

General Siao Wan told an Executive Member of the Revel League of Indo-China the following: (the member was his protege before but now in disgrace because of being friendly to VML): "V M L is worse than bandits. If VML doesn't get out of Baolac he'd dend bandits to destroy it. If the bandits cannot do it, he'd send regular troops, first to fight V M L, then to fight the Japs. Mr. C.M. Hoo flew back on board an American plane. The Americans gave him radio set and money to do intelligence service for them. On the other hand, Hoo keeps all the news from China's knowledge. He added: I'll immediately give the order to fight VML. Any VML man caught in China will be killed. No VML will be allowed to come to China.." 6 May 1945.

In another talk with the same member it is reported that the Generel said the following: "So long as VML representatives don't come to Chingsi to see him, he keeps considering VML as enemy, and he will inform America and England to declare VML bandits, and they will send planes to bomb, to machine gun, and to burn down houses in those places where VML exists. And then the Revolutionary League will be sent in to reorganize.

C. American. The Party has nothing but praise and kindnessfor the Americans and to send students there and invite American technicians here is its desire. Its relation with American OSS personnel and AGAS personnel has been very friendly. The Party has helped in returning several American pilots and Mr. C.M. Hoo had a personal confernece with General Chenault at Kunming on the subject.

VII. PROPAGANDA

Propaganda to further the parties platform was carried on by small propaganda groups who traveled about the country. These groups or committees consisted in a large part by students.

The Committee published from time to time phamplets and leaflets in which it expressed the parties policies and exhorted the people against the Japs and French. This was of a limited extent as during the occupation printing methods and paper were at a premium.

VIII. GUERILLA WARFARE

Before the Jap surrender of 15 August, it was stated by party chiefs, that there were in Tonkin about 3,000 armed guerillas operating in small bands of to

15 to 20 men. Their armament consisted of the French 8mm rifle or "Musqueton" some old French Machine Guns, Russian rifles, very old single shot powder type shot guns, some stens and Brens (which had been drppped by the British to the French after 9 March), some captured Jap weapons, and lastly bows and arrows, of which the writer has seen several.

During the time, the writer was in FIC with Vietminh troops (16 July to 25 August), reports were constantly coming in of small clashes with Vietminh troops against Jap convoys. To list all these clashes is impossible since many are not known and what is known the intelligence on it was not always too clear due to the extreme difficulties of communication.

Naturally, the Japs were no match for the poorly armed Vietminh, therefore their action was usually hit and run, seldom wiping out a whole Jap column and seldom capturing Jap materiel.

The following are some fairly well authenticated engagements between Japs and Vietminh troops in Tonkin:

1. Jap Lt. Hamodi killed at Thai Nguyen.
2. 10 July-Captured 36 rifles at Luc-an-Chau
3. 14 Jly -Captured 40 rifles at Yen Binh.
4. 25 July-VML captured districts of Hiephoa and Yen The.
5. 4 July-20 Frenchmen-men, women and children, in Jap concentration camp at Tam Dao liberated by Vietminh.
6. 23 July-9 single shot rifles, 18 horses, 5 tons of rice captured near Cho Moi on Colonial Route 3
7. 20-25 August-Occupied town of Thai Nguyen. Japs refused to surrender for 5 days. Street fighting. Captured over 500 rifles, 250 pairs of shoes, 72 blankets, 8 horses, 4 automobiles, over 3,000 tons of rice, large quanties sugar, salt and many miscellaneous articles.

(The above represents only a fraction of all engagements)

In many other waysthe people hindered the Japs. They destroyed bridges, dug craters in roads, put barricades across roads, and the people of Cho Chu burned down their entire village and left the ruins to the Japs.

IX. FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT AFTER JAP SURRENDER

Immediately after the 15th August announcement of surrender negotiations Party leaders began moving into Hanoi. The Japs had entered into negotiations with the Vietminh there permitting them to carry arms and allowing their parades, demonstrations, "manifestations", etc.

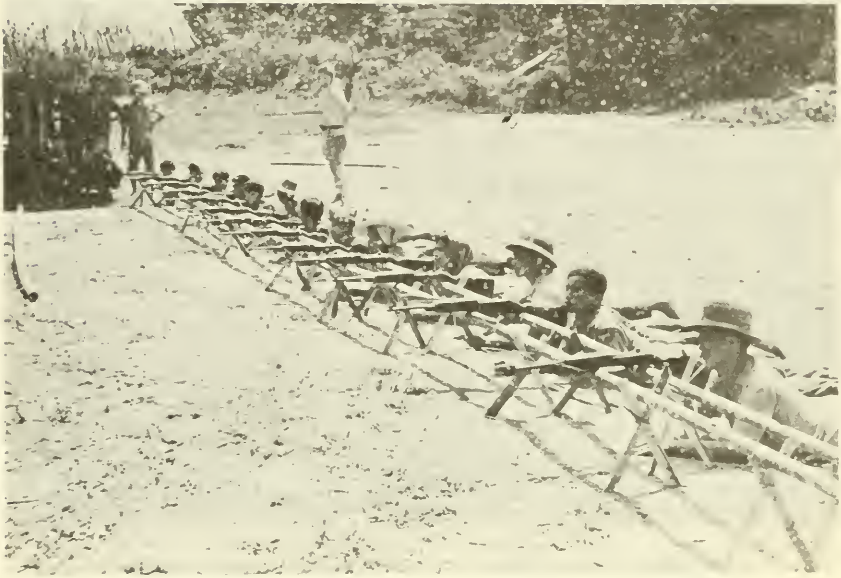
The Vietminh took over several public buildings including the former home of the French "Resident Superior". The "Guarde Indigene" also surrendered to the Vietminh, not only in Hanoi but everywhere. The Vietminh thus obtained all their arms, ammunition, stocks of clothing, etc.

The party set up a new Provisional Government selecting party and non-party members to cabinet posts. The new government was enthusiastically supported by what appeared to be a vast majority of the population all over F.I.C. The puppet emperor, Baodai, abdicated in its favor and offered his services as advisor.

The Government proclaimed a "Ceclaration of Independence". It also stated that a general election would be held in two months, and universal suffrage would be in effect. Everyone over 18 would have voting privileges, except criminals and those insane.

Mr. C.M. Hoo (real name Ho Chi Minh) was made temporary President of the Provisional Council and Minister of Foreign affairs. Mr. Van (real name: Vo Nguyen Giap) was made temporary minister of the Interior.

PICTURES FROM THE "DEER" MISSION WITH ORIGINAL CAPTIONS



August 15, 1945 – "Training native soldiers in the use of the Carbine by triangulation."

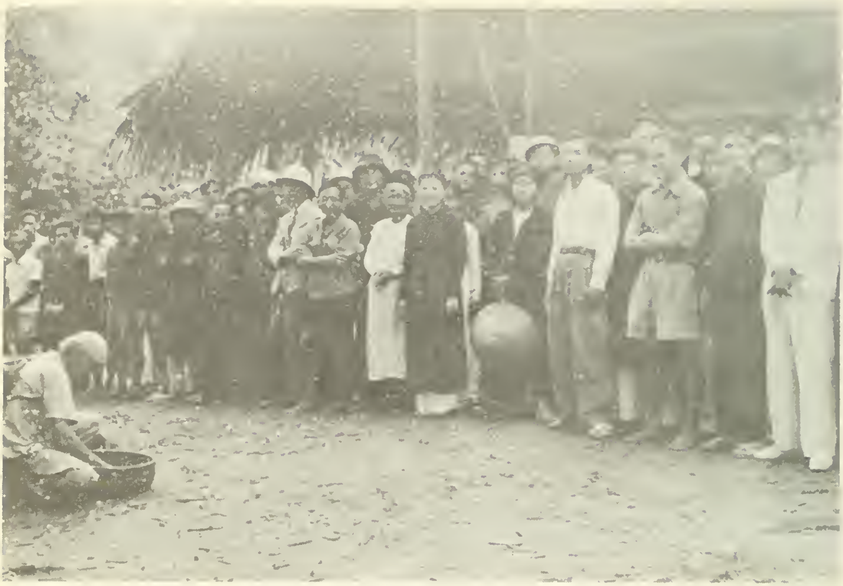
August 16, 1945 – "Firing the Carbine."

August 17, 1945—"Soldiers practice grenade throwing."

August 17, 1945—"Maj. Thomas illustrating the use of grenade."

August 17, 1945 – "Soldiers practice sighting the bazooka."

August 16, 1945 – "Firing the rifle grenade."



August 17, 1945—"Viet Minh party leaders welcoming team."

August 17, 1945—"Another party of leaders from Hanoi for conference to determine national policy for Indo-China."

August 19, 1945—"Soldiers resting on trail to Thai Nguyen, our objective. Trail is secret one twisting thru rice fields and forests."

August 19, 1945—"In village of Tam Dinh. Viet Minh leaders plan attack on Jap garrison in Thai Nguyen"

August 20, 1945 – "Troops take up positions in street"

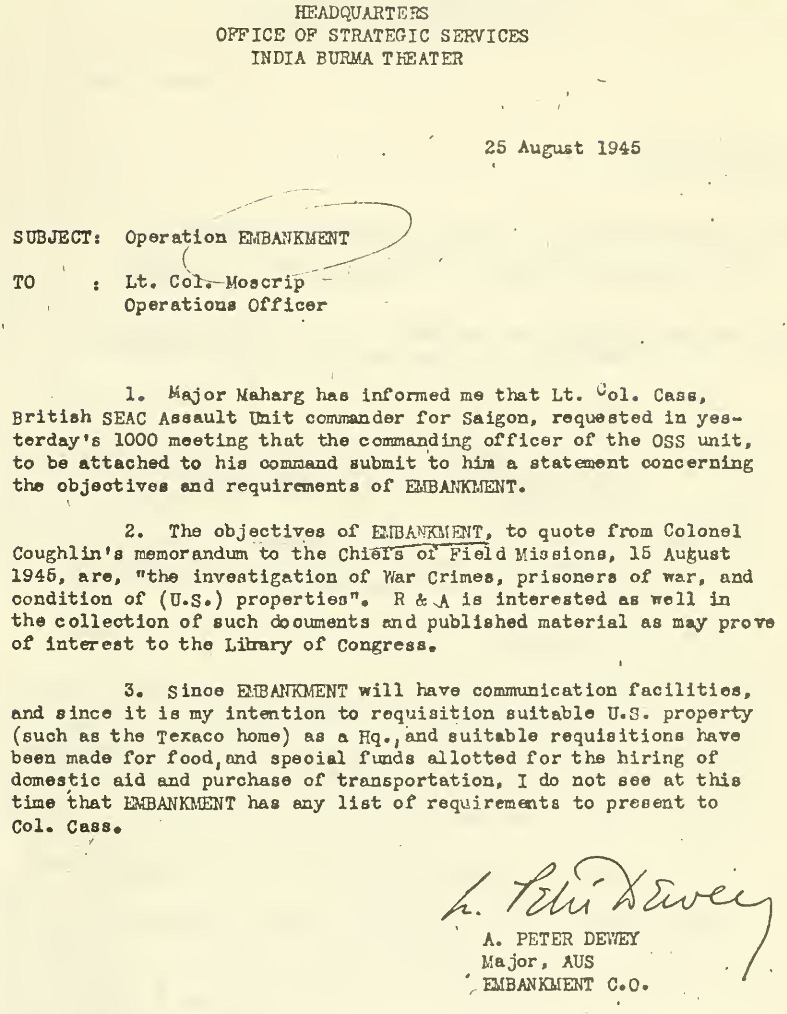
August 20, 1945 – "Preparing to move off to fight."

September 1, 1945 – "Road thru Thai Nguyen to Hanoi."

PHU LO
HANOI THAI NGUYEN
G

September 23, 1945 – Bus (charcoal burner) between Hanoi and here."

II. "DETACHMENT 404": MISSION TO SAIGON



HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
INDIA BURMA THEATER

25 August 1945

SUBJECT: Operation EMBANKMENT

TO : Lt. Col. Moscrip
Operations Officer

1. Major Maharg has informed me that Lt. Col. Cass, British SEAC Assault Unit commander for Saigon, requested in yesterday's 1000 meeting that the commanding officer of the OSS unit, to be attached to his command submit to him a statement concerning the objectives and requirements of EMBANKMENT.

2. The objectives of EMBANKMENT, to quote from Colonel Coughlin's memorandum to the Chiefs of Field Missions, 15 August 1945, are, "the investigation of War Crimes, prisoners of war, and condition of (U.S.) properties". R & A is interested as well in the collection of such documents and published material as may prove of interest to the Library of Congress.

3. Since EMBANKMENT will have communication facilities, and since it is my intention to requisition suitable U.S. property (such as the Texaco home) as a Hq., and suitable requisitions have been made for food, and special funds allotted for the hiring of domestic aid and purchase of transportation, I do not see at this time that EMBANKMENT has any list of requirements to present to Col. Cass.

A. Peter Dewey
A. PETER DEWEY
Major, AUS
EMBANKMENT C.O.

BRANCH HEADQUARTERS
Det. 404
SAIGON, FRENCH INDO-CHINA

17 Sept., 1945

SUBJECT: Chronologigal list of dates for Mission EMBANKMENT.

TO : Commanding Officer, OSS SU Detachment 404, Saigon FIC.

1. The following is a chronological list of the more important dates of mission EMBANKMENT, up to and including 17 Sept., 1945.

2 Sept.	Advance POW party consisting of Lt. Counasse and 3 EM arrived Saigon.
4 Sept.	1st echelon EMBANKMENT consisting of Lt. Col. Dewey, Major Bluechel, Capt. Frost, Lts. Bekker and Wicks arrived Saigon.
5 Sept.	2nd echelon EMBANKMENT, consisting of Capts. White, Cooldige and Varner, arrived Saigon. 8 combat cargo planes arrived for evacuation of POWs.
6 Sept.	214 American POWs departed for Calcutta via 8 combat cargo planes.
7 Sept.	Residence of Mr. Ferier acquired for EMBANKMENT headquarters. Physical possession taken.
10 Sept.	Household staff of servants acquired. French Officers of ACM entertained at dinner.
12 Sept.	Capt. Leonard arrived Saigon.
13 Sept.	Major Gen. Gracey arrived Saigon. Capts. Coolidge and Varner departed for Dalat.
15 Sept.	Capts. Coolidge and Varner returned from Dalat.

Herbert J. Bluechel
HERBERT J. BLUECHEL
Major, CAC
Adjutant.

17 Sept OK recieved.

MLB-2739-A

BRANCH HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
DETACHMENT 404

Saigon, FIC.,
30 September1945.

SUBJECT: Political aims and philosophy of the Viet Minh Government of French Indo-China, and thei r attitude toward America and Americans.

TO : The Commanding Officer, OSS Detachment 404, Headquarters SEAC, APO 432.

The aim of the Viet Minh party as expressed by Foreign Minister Pham Ngoc Thach during an interview on 15 September, 1945, was to gain by peaceable means self government for the Annamese people. He stated that the party was sufficiently well organized to assume immediate government of Viet Nam, i.e., the three costal provinces of Cochinchina, Annam, and Tonkin. Laos and Cambodia are considered separate countries by the Annamese, but their plans included provisions for an entente with those two provinces together with Thailand whereby an economic bloc could be formed.

The main objective was to rid the Annamites of French rule, immediately if possible, gradually if necessary (the Philippines plan was freqnently cited by M. Thach as a model). According to Thach, this was by no means incompatible with French desires, for French commercial interests would remain. In fact he stated that the Viet Minh wanted and needed French interests to develop the country. But it was also inferred that an Annamese government would be in a position to exclude undesirable firms and invite other foreign interests, particularly American. Thach was thoroughly convinced that American concerns could make an immense contribution to the development of the country.

According to the original plan, the aims of the Viet Minh were to be presented to the French Government and also to the British and American representativ es who, it was hoped, would assist as neutrals i n subsequent negotiations. Thach hoped that the French would recognize the "just and reasonable claims of the Viet Minh" and make provisions for at least a small measure of Annamite self-rule. It appears that the Viet Minh expected the French to heed the arguments and the British to "weigh them impartially".

But as the situation progressed, no one received the Viet Minh Ministers and the party was forced to evacuate the public buildings they had been using for their government. The Viet Minh protested but gradually retired, under force of arms, eventually deciding on a passive course of action, namely - to evacuate all Annamites from Saigon Cholon area, and set up headquarters in the country. It was felt that Saigon could be brought to terms without violence since the French population was entirely

(Political aims and Philosophy, Cont.)

dependent upon Annamited for food. Further, no Annamite would work for any Frenchman, and thus all French concerns would be unable to function. Since the Viet Minh controlled at least a majority of the Annamites by one means or another, such a plan was quite practicable.

On the 22nd of September, the eve of the outbreaks, Thach stated in an intervi ew, that as a final measure of desperation of the Viet Minh would stage a mass demonstration of many thousands of Annamites marching through Saigon completly unarmed and carrying only banners and emblems of the party. It was hoped that French and British troops would fire on the Annamites causing many causalties, bringing the attention of the world to these "peaceful, freedom-loving martyrs".

I am civinced that Thach at no time planned on having recourse to violence and I have reason to believe that he is appaled by the turn events have taken. It is certain he longed for the goodwill and friendship of Americans and of the British as well, though in the latter case he was discouraged by many rebuffs. Prior to 1 October, General Gracey had refused to meet with the leaders of the Viet Minh and ignored their pleas for a conference. M. Thach is recogni zed by General Gracey and Colonel Cedille as the official spokesman and one of the three leaders of the Southern Committee of the Viet Minh.

Since 23 September when the French, through force of arms, took over the city hall, the Annamese have resorted to a reign of terror. Their cry has been "death to all Europeans", and have engaged in kidnappings, murders, arson, and indiscriminate sniping. The original plan of evacuating Saigon and thereby cutting it off from all sources of food supply was placed in operation, but in addition armed warfare of a sort has been resorted to and many small pitched battles have resulted. Just how far the Annamese will go in their determination to gain self independence remains to be seen.

An interesting but important side-light is the fact that Americans are not considered to belong in the classification "Europeans". Americans are considered to be a separate people, and the Viet Minh leaders expressed the hope that Americans would vi ew favorably their bid for independence, since we ourselves fought for and gained our independence under a situation considered to be similar to that as exi sts in Indo China to-day. The Viet Minh leaders were especially desirous of gaining our friendship and often expressed the hope that we would sponser their bid for independence and thereby force the French to yield.

In view of the foregoing, and in view of the many instances of deference shown to me and other members of the OSS mission while moving through Annamite districts under protection of a displayed American flag, details of which are contained in an attached affidavit, I am convinced that Major A. PETER DEWEY, AC, 0-911947, was ambushed and killed through being mistaken of being of a nationality other than American. If the Jeep in which he was riding at the time of the incident had been displaying an American flag, I feel positive that the shots would not have been fired. A flag was not being displayed in accofdance with verbal instructions issued by General Gracey, Commanding General of the Allied Control Commission, Saigon. Details of those instructions are contained in an accompanying affi davit.

HERBERT J. BLUECHEL,
Capt., CAC.,
0-286819.

MLB-2739-J

BRANCH HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
DETACHMENT 404

Saigon, FIC.,
30 September, 1945

SUBJECT: Comments on report published by the Allied Control Commission, Saigon, concerning the events of 26 September, 1945.

TO : The Commanding Officer, OSS Detachment 404, Headquarters SEAC, APO 432.

1. The following comments are made with regards to statements contained in the report published by the Allied Control Commission, Saigon, concerning the events of 26 September, 1945.

A. Par. 6, 2nd line "ordered to - - - recover Col Dewey's body ". Force headquarters were not aware at that time that the body of Col Dewey had been taken away by the Annamese. Major BLUECHEL was first informed of that fact by Major RHOADS, AC, shortly after appearing at the scene of the incident. This is verified in Par. 9, line 7, "- - WENHAM then explained - - - to restore order - - etc., ".

B. Par. 13, line 2. "They came to the area in MT - - -(to) attack the American mission". This is a statement of fact for which Major WENHAM has no proof of any kind.

C. Par. 15, line 6. "Col Cass had asked Dewey - - satisfied with safety of his house". I have no knowledge of this. Major DEWEY never mentioned the incident to me nor to any other member of the OSS mission.

D. Par. 24. I have no knowledge of this incident.

E. Par. 25. To these conculsions I do not agree. While it is true the Annamese fired on the OSS headquarters in spite of the fact an American flag was flying, yet by this time the fight was on and I do not believe the Annamese stoped to consider or to realize they were attacking American occupied property. They were undoubtedly seeking revenge for the 5 Annamites hit during the course of my escape from the ambush, and nothing but force of arms could stop them. To use this as a premis for the conculsion that "it is extremely doubtful whether the flying of a flag ot the painting of the U.S. flag on the Jeep would have had any deterrent effect on the attackers", is without logical sequence. That is a conculsion they would like to believe, but they have no facts with which to propound such a statement.

HERBERT J. BLUECHEL,
Capt., CAC.

MLB-2739-B

AFFIDAVIT

Before me the undersigned authority duly empowered to take acknowledgements, appeared Captain HERBERT J. BLUECHEL, 0-286819, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed below, and having been by me first duly sworn, did on oath without fear or compulsion, state as follows:

This is an account of the events subsequent to and following the killing of A. PETER DEWEY, Major, AC, 0-911947.

All events detailed herein transpired on Wednesday, 26 September 1945. In accordance with arrangements previously made, Major DEWEY was scheduled to depart Saigon for Calcutta, India, and subsequently Kandy, Ceylon, via ATC. A radio message had been received on the afternoon of 25 September informing us of the expected arrival of an ATC plane in Saigon at approximately 09:3o hours 26 September. Accordingly Major DEWEY made all necessary preparations to depart on that plane, and on the morning of 26 September I drove him to the air-port in our Jeep, following the route marked "A" on the accompanying sketch. We departed OSS headquarters at approximately 09:00 and arrived at the air-port at approximately 09:10. There we contacted Major FRANK H. RHOADS, AC, 0-404879, commanding ATC personnel stationed in Saigon. He informed us he had not received news of the plane as yet, but expected it to arrive before noon. I then drove Major DEWEY to the Continental Hotel, Saigon, following the route marked "B" on accompanying sketch, where we picked up his luggage. Major DEWEY had at his disposal a room in the Hotel where he conducted considerable OSS business, and where he also kept considerable of his personal equipment. We returned to the air-port following route "B" arriving at approximately 10:30. At about 11:00 Major DEWEY discovered he had left his dog tags at the Hotel, and I drove him to the Continental to recover same. During the course of this trip we were informed Captain JOSEPH R. COOLIDGE, AC, 0-854932, a member of the OSS Mission, had been brought in from Dalat in a rather serious condition from wounds received in a fight with armed annamites. (See separate report for full details). We saw Capt. COOLIDGE at the British 75th Field Ambulance Hospital, and after Major DEWEY had assured himself that Capt. COOLIDGE was receiving adequate medical attention, we returned to the air-port following route "B", arriving at approximately 12:15.

During the course of these trips between the air-port, OSS headquarters, and Saigon, we encountered several annamese constructed road blocks, locations of which are marked on accompanying sketch. At none of these road blocks did we see displayed any arms or any annamese bearing arms. At all road blocks encountered, there were usually present 3 or 4 annamese, but in all instances these people were unarmed and offered no resistance to our passing. This is particularly true of the road block No. 1, which is the point at which Major DEWEY was killed, and is also the road block through which we passed on our initial trip to the air-port at 09:00. At that time we encountered no resistance of any kind, and passed through the block without incident. As was usual, there were several unarmed annamese loitering within the immediate vicinity, but no arms were observed by either of us. This particular road block (No. 1) had been in existence since Sunday, 23 September 1945, and all members of OSS had passed through it a great many times during the course of the week. At no time was any resistance encountered by any OSS member.

It will be noted from the sketch map that route "A" is the shortest route to the air-port from OSS headquarters, and for that reason was followed considerably when any OSS member travelled to or from the air-port, even though it was a back road and in poor condition. Route "C", as marked on the sketch map, is the most direct route to Saigon; however, it passes through a thickly populated annamite village, and at various times prior to Sunday 23 September, and at practically all times after that date, the route was blocked by a series of at least 20 road blocks, and to by-pass these caused a considerable loss of time. Therefore, it was our custom to take route "A" to the air-port, and from there route "B" into Saigon, we having decided this to be the saftest and easiest route to follow.

At 12:25 Major DEWEY decided we would have time to return to OSS headquarters for lunch, and arranged with the ATC personnel that in event the plane should arrive during our absence, its departure would be delayed until Major DEWEY had returned to the field. Accordingly, we left the air-port in the Jeep, and for the first time that day, Major DEWEY was driving. He was armed with a cal .45 Colt automatic pistol, and a cal .30 carbine, M-1. I was armed with one cal .45 Colt automatic pistol, includding 3 clips of ammunition totalling 21 rounds. We followed route "A", and as we approached road block No. 1, I did not see or notice anything unusual. There were several unarmed annamese loitering around as usual, and nothing appeared to have been changed or altered since our initial trip at 09:00. From the accompanying sketch it will be noted that it was a staggered block, necessitating an "S" maneuver on the part of the Jeep to negotiate. The block itself was constructed of tree limbs and brush, and in itself was not formidable in any sense of the word. However, it was necessary to slow down when passing through, and when the action took place the Jeep was travelling approximately 8 miles per hour. This is an estimate.

Major DEWEY was talking to me about the unfortunate experience suffered by Capt. COOLIDGE and he was quite upset about the incident. The Jeep was in the position of traversing the curved portion of the "S", and thus was travelling at an angle to the main course of the road. At that moment, a hidden light machine gun opened fire at point blank range. The gun was mounted in the ditch on the East side of the road and had been camouflaged with brush. At the time the burst was fired, I was looking at Major DEWEY to better hear what he was saying, and saw out of the corner of my eye the position of the machine gun as revealed by the firing. The bullets struck Major DEWEY on the left side of the head slightly to the rear near the left ear. I think one bullet shot off a portion of his lower jaw, although I'm not too certain of this. Blood gushed in all directions, and I am certain Major DEWEY met instant death. None of the bullets struck me, nor did any of them pierce the windshield that I noticed. It is safe to assume that all shots fired entered Major DEWEY's body. This occurred at approximately 12:30.

I certify that neither Major DEWEY nor myself did anything to provoke the incident, and that no warning was given by the annamese prior to the opening of fire. I do not know the type of machine gun, but will certify that it was an automatic weapon as was evident from the rate of fire heard

The Jeep continued on its angle course, and upon reaching the ditch on the West side of the road, rolled over on its right side. The upturned chassis afforded me protection from subsequent firing of the machine gun. Major DEWEY's body caught on the steering wheel and remained in the Jeep. I did not have the time to examine the body carefully, but from the external condition of the head and the amount of blood flowing from the several wounds, I felt positive he was dead at that time, and will so certify. At no time after the shots were fired did he utter a sound, andeven though I remained alongside the Jeep for a period of three or four minutes, I did not observe him to make a move of any kind. Before leaving the scene of the killing, I took a last look at the body to be certain that there was nothing I could do for him.

At the point where the Jeep turned over is a thick hedge, being approximately 3 feet thick and 6 or 7 feet high. This afforded me protection from the annamese across the road who were firing rifles in my direction. I grabbed the carbine and attempted to shoot at several annamese who were approaching me and firing fifles. Their route of approach was along route "D" as marked on the sketch. The carbine jammed and I was forced to abandon it and depend on my pistol. I was fortunate in inflicting three hits on the annamese approaching along route "D", causing the remaining to take cover. I noticed approximately 10, although I did not take time to count. Looking through the hedge I noticed 10 or 15 annamites making their way south on the road in the direction of the OSS headquarters, and realized they were attempting to cut me off from my only line of retreat. I fired several shots at them causing them to take cover. At this point I crawled under the Jeep in order to take a last look at Major DEWEY's body, and was satisfied I could do nothing for him and was certain he was dead. I then made my way down the hedge in the direction of the OSS headquarters, employing fire and movement tactics. The hedge extends approximately 100 yards, and the OSS house is approximately 500 yards from the scene of the initial shooting. I reached the end of the hedge without being hit, and can certify that I did hit five of the pursuing annamese. The stretch of ground bordering the West side of the road constitutes the Saigon Golf Course. The ground is level and flat, and the area from the end of the hedge to the OSS headquarters is devoid of any cover that could be used as protection from rifle fire. Since the pursuing annamese were closing in on me I had no choice but to make a run for it. This I did, during the course of which a great fusillade of shots were fired at me but none found their target. I reached OSS headquarters and immediately alerted all personnel to defend against the expected annamese attack. During the action just described I had expended 18 of my 21 rounds of ammunition.

Present in the OSS headquarters at the time of my arrival, which was at approximately 12:45, were the following:

Capt. FRANK M. WHITE, Inf., O-1017547
T/5 GEORGE WICKES, DEML, 32938637
Major FRANCOIS VERGER, French Army, attached to E Group, Saigon Control Commission.
Mr. JAMES McCLINCY, American War Correspondent
Mr. WILLIAM DOWNS, " " "

The last three persons listed had been invited to lunch by Capt, WHITE.

These I placed at strategic places in and around the house and ordered them to fire at any armed annamese they saw firing at or approaching the house. I roamed from point to point in the house and assisted in stopping the attack of the annamese. Our arms consisted of five cal .30 carbines, M-1, and assorted pistols including three cal. 32's, three cal. 38's, and five cal. 45 automatics.

For the next 20 or 30 minutes firing was brisk, and we inflicted many hits on the annamese who had deployed themselves on the golf course which extends to the front of the headquarters. I would estimate the attacking force to number approximately 50. the golf course having become untenable, the annamese moved to the North, East and South sides of the house firing from under the cover of the heavy bushes and hedges that surround the house. From this time on firing was very intermitant.

At approximately 13:30, 1st Lt. LESLIE S. FROST, SC, O-550711, and 2nd Lt. HERBERT W, VARNER, MP, O-1799401, both members OSS, appeared on the scene, having driven to the house from the air-port following route "A". See accompanying reports submitted by both officers. They were accompanied by: Sgt. GERALD E. BOHN 37319392, Pvt. LYMAN C. HANNA 34334886, members of the ATC detachment stationed in Saigon. All were extremely fortunate in reaching the headquarters without being fired on since they had to traverse the road block at which Major DEWEY was killed. Fortunately they arrived during a lull in the shooting. Both officers reported the Jeep to be in the position as when I left it. Lt. VARNER took up a defensive position. Lt. FROST being our radio operator, I ordered to immediately contact our headquarters at Kandy, Ceylon. This he subsequantly did, and I kept them informed of what was transpiring. Our telephone lines had been cut so I radioed to Kandy asking them to contact the British radio station at the Gardens, with the request that they in turn contact the Control Commission in Saigon and notify them of our position. I later learned that this had been accomplished, although word had already reached British Headquarters in a manner which will be subsequantly described.

At approximately 13:15 a machine gun opened fire from our right front and it is presumed that this was the same gun that killed Major DEWEY. Although the gun fired several bursts,no hits were sustained. This was the only time the gun fired, and since it was not seen after the cessation of hostilities, it is presumed it was removed to a hidden place for safe keeping. At approximately 13:35 I ordered Capt.WHITE to place the Japanese guards at strategic places in and around the house. There were 9 in all, and their primary duty had been to guard the house on a 24-hour schedule. This Capt. WHITE did to my satisfaction, although I must report the Japanese did not take any part in the fighting until approximately 15:10 when one Japanese, who had been stationed on the roof, fired 2 shots into a thick clump of bushes boarding the house on the North side.

By 15:00 firing had ceased and the annamites had been forced to retire because of the accuracy of our fire. At about 15:10 they raised a Red Cross flag and approached the golf course to our front to evacuate their dead and wounded. At this point Capt. GOSLIN, British Army, walked into our house, having come from his quarters about 150 yards to the South. He had heard the firing but was not aware we had been attacked. At this moment the two war correspondents, McCLINCY and DOWNS, asked permission to proceed to the air-port in order to notify British Headquarters of our situation and to request aid. There is on the golf course a concrete drainage ditch, 4 feet wide and 5 feet deep which terminates in the vicinity of the air-port. See accompanying sketch. I granted them permission to go and instructed them to proceed down this ditch which would give them good protection in case they were attacked. A visual reconnaissance from the roof of our house revealed that there were no annamites visible along the line of their route, and they took off. They had with them two Cal. 30 ~~pistols~~ CARBINES and 100 rounds of ammunition. They subsequently reached the air-port without incident and contacted Major RHOADS who in turn notified British Headquarters. For details of subsequent events, see report as submitted by Major RHOADS, attached.

At about 15:10, a truck filled with Japanese working party was observed passing down the road North in front of the house. Capt. WHITE requested permission to stop them and have them accompany him to recover the body of Major DEWEY. This permission I granted after ascertaining that the area around our headquarters was comparatively safe and free of armed annamites. For details of this mission see report attached as written by Capt. WHITE.

I remained at headquarters during all this time in order to maintain command of the situation and to maintain control of the radio contact which had been established with our headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon. I kept our headquarters fully informed of all events as they occurred. I was informed of the negotiations for the recovery of Major DEWEY's body and subsequent results, and upon the arrival of the troop of Gurkhas, I immediately ordered all personnel to gather their personal belongings and to prepare to evacuate the house, since the area could not be adequately defended against a night attack with our limited personnel. We had only one truck available, and this we loaded to the limit with the more important items, including the radio equipment.

We departed OSS house at approximately 17:15 under escort of a portion of the Gurkha troop. Before leaving I instructed the Japanese guard to maintain their guard posts. We arrived at the Hotel Continental at 17:40, where we established ourselves in suitable quarters.

At 18:00 I paid a visit to Colonel CEDILLE and informed him of the events just described, and appraised him of the facts concerning Major DEWEY's body. He personally went to see Gen, GRACEY and word reached me shortly thereafter that they had personally ordered all forces under their command to conduct a complete search for his body.

I cannot speak too highly of the oersonnel present during the above described action. My orders were carried out explicitly and accurately, and all reflected the true spirit and training of the U. S. Army. Captain WHITE and T/5 WICKES are especially to be commended: Capt. WHITE for the way in which he executed my several orders to him, and for his courage in volunteering for the task of proceeding down the road to recover the body of Major DEWEY, he having volunteered in spite of the fact that a considerable number of armed annamese were still within the immediate vicinity. T/5 GEORGE WICKES for the personal courage displayed in meeting the initial onslaught of the attacking force, and for his subsequent actions and extreme cooperation during the balance of the action.

It is the spirit and courage of such men that have made the United States Army the formidable striking force that it is to-day.

Herbert J. Bluechel
HERBERT J, BLUECHEL
Capt., CAC.
0-286819.

Further affiant sayeth not, wherefore witness my hand ~~and seal of office~~ this 13th day of October 1945.

~~My commission expires~~.
Saigon, French Indo-China.

Francis M. Small
Signature ~~o Notary Public~~
Major, AGD
Asst Adjutant
HQ OSS IBT

Witnesses;-

1) ____________________

2) ____________________

MLB-2739-E

AFFIDAVIT

Before me the undersigned authority duly empowered to take acknowledgements, appeared Captain FRANK M. WHITE Jr., O-1017547, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed below, and having been by me first duly sworn, did on oath without fear or compulsion, state as follows:

After having obtained proper clearance from the Mission Executive Officer, I invited three persons to our headquarters for luncheon. They were Major FRANCOIS VERGER, a French officer attached to the Allied Control Commission, Mr. JAMES McCLINCY and Mr. WILLIAM DOWNS, both American war correspondents. I picked them up at the Continental Hotel at 12:15 and we proceeded immediately to the headquarters house via Rue Paul Blanchy. We progressed without incident through numerous road blocks until we reached the turnabout labeled Point 2 (See attached sketch). There we heard general firing in the immediate vicinity and we noted several burning buildings. We were told by an officer of the British Army who approached our car that the trouble was not serious and that the Gurkha troops with him had the situation in hand.

The remaining mile of the trip from the turnabout to the OSS headquarters was made without incident.

Almost immediately after arriving at the house we began to hear rifle fire. We stepped to the front porch in an effort to locate the riflemen or their target. None of us had any idea at the time that we ourselves were probably the intended targets.

After a few rounds had struck near and around the house, I went to the second floor, entered the arms room and broke out all the carbines we had. I gave one to Lt. WICKS who was in the building at our arrival; a second to Major VERGER; the third to Mr. DOWNS and I kept the last piece for myself.

Only a matter of minutes later Capt. BLUECHEL was sighted coming in through the front gate of the house. As he was covered with blood and stumbling from exhaustion I rushed to the lawn to meet him. TEC-5 WICKS was with me. The others remained in the house. Capt. BLUECHEL told us that Major DEWEY had been killed in an ambush several hundred yards up the road (Point A) and that he had had to fight his way back to the house to save his own life. He ordered us to defend ourselves and the house against the impending attack. The time, although I do not remember referring to my watch, must have been about 12:50.

After hearing Capt. BLUECHEL's news, WICKS and I saw four annamites rushing towards the house from across the golf course. They were armed. WICKS and I commenced fire almost simultaneously. Three of them dropped but the fourth got away, although we believe we hit him.

By this time Major VERGER joined WICKS and I in the yard. We fired at whatever targets presented themselves. Ten minutes or so later we retired to the house itself which afforded better vision. In the meantime, the three Japanese guards who were on duty when Major BLUECHEL returned to the house, stayed at their posts but took no active part in the action.

After regaining the house the entire group disposed themselves at vantage points on the second floor and the roof under direction of Capt. BLUECHEL. Our firing was brisk at this time - there being no scarcity of targets. The annamites were deployed generally in groups of from 5 to 10 per group, several of which could be seen in the golf course off to our right front. Later, probably because of the effective fire being delivered from the house, they began to leave their positions in the golf course and appeared to be attempting to flank the north side of our house. This route of approach would have afforded them much better cover.

Shortly before 13:30 Capt. BLUECHEL instructed me to redispose the Japanese guards. By this time the original three who were at the front gate when hostilities began had increased to six, the new arrivals presumably having come out of the guard house when it became evident to those there that the main house was being attacked.

I stationed four of the six on the flanks and rear of the house where they would be in a better position to deal with attacks from those quarters. One of the Japs was kept in the house with us as reserve and, in the event the outside Japs turned on us, for possible use as a hostage.

Fire at this junction was intermittent. At about 13:30 a truck towing a passenger car approached the house from the North. We recognized the passengers as Lts. VARNER and Frost of our own detachment with two enlisted men of the Air Transport Command. We were naturally surprised to see them as they had had to come through the road block at which Major DEWEY was ambushed.

At 15:10 the annamites raised a Red Cross flag in the golf course across the road. After a conference it was decided to take advantage in the halt in hostilities to send out for aid. DOWNS and McCLINCY, the two war correspondents, volunteered to cross the golf course. They were instructed by Capt. BLUECHEL to keep well to the South of the area held by the annamites, and make for the air-field where they would be able to notify British headquarters by telephone of our situation. This they did. Distance to the air-field being approximately 1½ to 2 miles.

Within another 10 minutes we sighted a 3-ton Jap truck proceeding South on the road. It was carrying a party of unarmed Japanese sailors. I asked Major BLUECHEL for permission to commandeer the truck and use it in an effort to recover Major DEWEY's body. Permission was granted, and, accompanied by Major VERGER, we ordered the truck to turn around and take us to the site of the killing.

After considerable argument with the Jap NCO who either couldn't understand my orders or was reluctant to return up the road, we forced the Japs to drive us to the barricade. We dismounted and searched around the barricade but discovered that both the Major's body and his Jeep had been carried away.

As VERGER and I were deciding on our next move we noticed further up the road a group of Annamites displaying a Red Cross flag. As we were on an errand of mercy ourselves we determined to try and stop the annamite aid party and obtain their assistance in recovering the Major's body. This we did and just as we made contact with the annamites we ourselves were joined by Major FRANK RHOADS, USAAF. In his jeep Major RHOADS had with him a Sanitary Corps Major, one enlisted man of his ATC detachment, and McCLINCY and DOWNS, all of whom he had met at the air-field.

We approached the annamite first aid party in a group. Major VERGER was holding up a carbine with a white handkerchief tied to it. In French I explained to an annamite in charge what I wanted. He told us he would summon the annamite field commander and we agreed on a truce for this purpose.

During the intermission while we waited for the arrival of the annamite leader we had a chance to look about and take stock of the situation. We were able to detect the presence of a considerable group of armed annamites who were under partial cover in the area. We were not, however, able to see any evidence of the machine gun which killed Major DEWEY and which later had been employed against the house.

Within a few minutes the Red Cross man returned with the man who was presented to us as the chief of the annamite field force. He was between thirty and thirty-five years old and wore military boots and breaches, He spoke fair French but no English. Conversation with him was difficult inasmuch as he was in a state of excitement verging on hysteria.

Immediately we explained to him that we were Americans and that we had come seeking the body of Major DEWEY. At first he said he knew nothing of any body but at our insistence he was able to remember an "incident" in which a Colonel had been killed at the barricade.

It was difficult all along to make much sense out of this man, but in the course of the parley we had admissions that his men had shot Colonel DEWEY and that they had fired on our house. However, throughout he stoutly maintained that had he known that the Colonel was an American, he would never have allowed the shots fired. He had attacked the house, he said, because he believed that both French and British officers lived there,even though only an American flag was flown, and because we had killed so many of his men. During the course of the fighting he said we had killed eight annamites. He did not mention the number of wounded he had suffered.

We tried to come immediately to the point but only after some little time were we able to make any arrangements for the recovery of the body. We finally reached the following terms: we would allow him to recover three of his dead from the golf course immediately in front of the OSS house in exchange for which he would produce the body of Colonel DEWEY. We permitted his men to use Major RHOADS' jeep for this purpose.

In the meantime our negotiations were hindered by the two war correspondents, DOWNS and McCLINCY, who had returned with Major RHOADS. The correspondents kept plying the annamite leader with questions which provoked from him lengthy and impassioned speeches on the indignities suffered by the Viet-Minh from the French. He also attacked the British at length, charging that the British, too, desired to "dominate" the annamite people.

Within another 10 minutes the jeep had returned from the golf course with the three annamite dead laid across the hood. We noticed that the equipment on them, including cartridge boxes and canteens was Japanese. Our part of the bargain fulfilled, the annamite chief and a detail was about to depart to bring the Colonel's body to us. Whether he would have eventually carried out his pledge is impossible to say.

At the moment of his departure firing broke out anew, this time coming from the vicinity of Point 2. We were able to see immediately that the shooting was coming from a party of Gurkhas (later identified as two platoons of the 31st Gurkha Rifles). They were coming up the road towards us and were stampeding a large number of non-combattant annamites ahead of them.

Our position then - being in annamite hands with Gurkhas coming towards us - began to become awkward. This situation was further complicated by the two war correspondents. Apparently being unfamiliar with the disposition of Gurkha troops during combat, the two correspondents attempted to halt the oncoming troops in order to spare the non-combattant annamites caught between the lines.

On agreement with Major RHOADS I broke off my negotiations with the annamites in an effort to try and prevent trouble between DOWNS and McCLINCY and the British Major commanding the Gurkhas. I was unsuccessful. The correspondents demanded that the Gurkhas retire while the civilians were cleared from the area. The Major refused. He told them his orders were to restore order "by the use of maximum force" and that was what he intended to do. The correspondents charged him with being a "murderer" if he continued. I finally managed to convince the correspondents that they were wasting their own and everyone else's time and they returned to OSS headquarters with me. Upon my return to the house I reported briefly what had happened to Capt. BLUECHEL. At approximately 17:00 we evacuated the OSS headquarters, moving to the Continental Hotel.

Frank M. White Jr.
FRANK M. WHITE Jr.,
Capt. Inf.,
0-1017547

Further affiant sayeth not, wherefore witness my hand ~~and seal of office~~ this 13th day of October 1945.
~~My commission expires~~ ____________.
Saigon, French Indo-China

Francis M. Arnall
Signature - ~~Notary Public~~
Major, AGD
Asst. Adjutant
HQ OSS IBT

Witnesses:-

1) ____________

2) ____________

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT
WAR DEPARTMENT
APO 432

25 October 1945

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Investigation of Death of Major Peter Dewey

TO : STRATEGIC SERVICES OFFICER, IBT

1. The investigation of the death of Major Dewey and the affidavits secured pertinent thereto by Captain Bluechel have been reviewed by the undersigned and are believed to constitute a very thorough and workman-like job. The reports are relatively dispassionate and under the circumstances reflect as close an approximation of the truth as would be possible. In any case, Captain Bluechel is obviously the most informed and logical source of information.

2. From my own observation and study, the general situation in Saigon reflects an intense desire on the part of the Annamese for independence and thorough hatred by them of the French and any other white people who happen to be in any way supporting or sympathizing with the French. It is true that they may be relatively more favorably disposed toward the Americans, but it should be borne in mind that the average Annamese thinks in terms of "white" people, and makes very little distinction between European and American. The hatred of the Annamese for the French has been brought about by the not too enlightened policy of the French, which has been to exploit the Annamese to the greatest degree possible and treat them more or less with contempt. To my observation, the French made a lot of money out of the Japanese occupation and are most anxious to have someone control the Annamese. The Annamese naturally greatly resent the British protection of French interests and inasmuch as the American military in Saigon regularly attend British staff meetings, it is quite likely that the Annamese infer that the United States tacitly approves the British policy.

3. The overt British attitude is to disarm the Japanese, send them home, and get out as soon as possible. If in actual fact this is done, it is doubted if the French will be able to control the situation.

4. With specific reference to the death of Major Dewey, in my judgment there is no question but that he was killed by the Annamese, and it is highly unlikely that the Annamese had any idea of his

identity at the time he was shot. There is some question in my mind as to whether it would have made a great deal of difference had he been flying an American flag. The road block and the machine gun emplacement appear to have been arranged with the intention of shooting at the next white man that came by. It is possible even that the objective was to secure a jeep and such arms and ammunition as might be in the jeep. On the other hand, it is clear that there was no possible way for the Annamese to distinguish the occupants of the jeep from French other than that it is the British and Americans who drive jeeps in the Saigon area.

5. It appears that General Gracey is not well suited to his assignment. He seems to have adopted a notably bull-like attitude toward the Annamese calculating that this would cow them. In the light of later experience, he should have realized that in their overly emotional state, they would react violently towards his bluffs. It also is apparent that he had no need to bluff, but could have waited until adequate forces were at his disposal. His blunderings with the French POW's was most ill advised, and there is substantial reason for believing that his mishandling of his own assignment was the greatest single immediate contribution to the intensification of Annamese animosity toward all whites in Saigon, and thus indirectly contributed toward Major Dewey's death. Further, it is apparent that in issuing his orders that no flags would be flown by anyone other than himself, he was thinking too much in terms of his own personal prestige rather than in terms of the safety of his own and American officers.

6. There is no way of securing any direct corroboration or denial of the British statement that Major Dewey told Lt. Colonel Cass he was "satisfied with the safety of his establishment." It is obvious, however, that the British were completely satisfied with even less protection at ISLD Hq across and down the road from the OSS Hq, and only in the light of later developments would the issue take on importance. Gracey very probably grossly underestimated the danger.

7. It seems appropriate to mention here that Captain Bluechel was doing an outstanding intelligence job in Saigon. There was almost a constant flow of visitors to his quarters, including top ranking Japanese, British and French officials, many French civilians of importance, and he was also, until General Gracey made the situation too difficult, in touch with leading Annamese. With regard to these last, however, it is apparent that the political leaders of the Annamese were unable to control them and consequently scant reliance should be placed on their commitments. Also Captain Bluechel

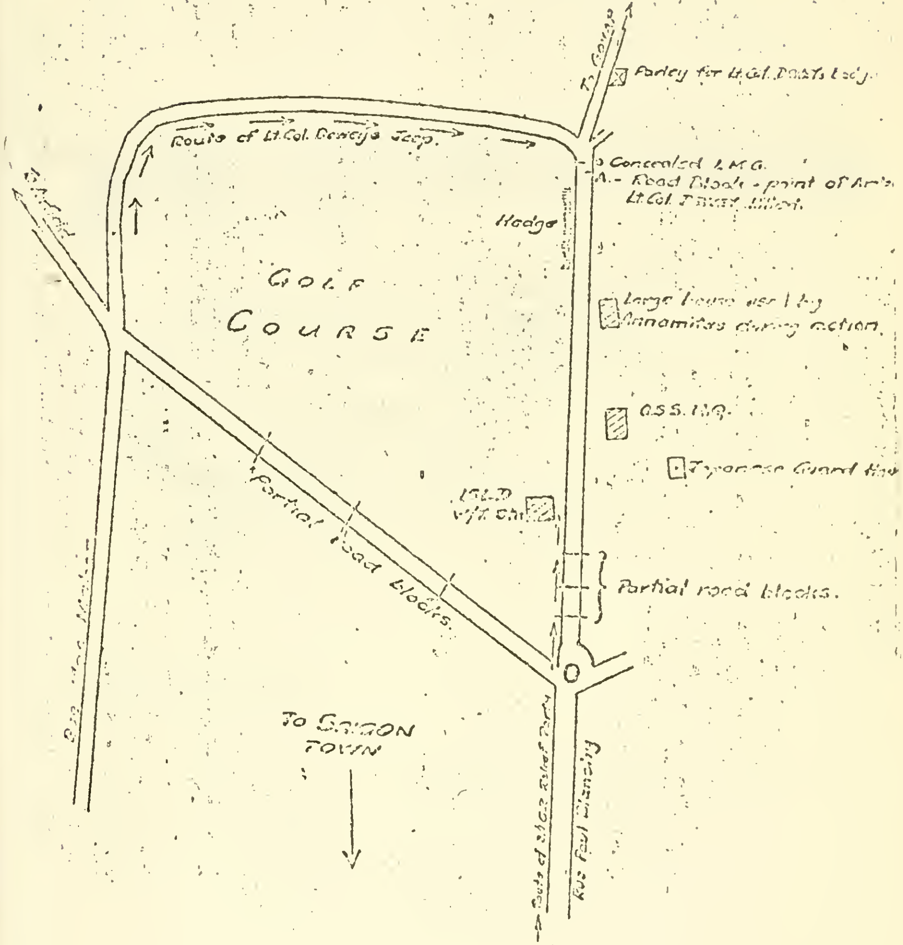
is most deserving of commendation for the type of leadership he displayed. It was obvious that he commanded the respect and confidence of those serving under him, as well as the officers with whom he conducted liaison activities.

8. As a further gratuitous comment, it is unlikely in my opinion that military personnel will in the future be in a position to secure much valuable intelligence from French Indo-China. As soon as the situation reaches a point where elements of danger are in control, they should be replaced by civilian personnel operating under the cover of newspaper correspondents or others having legitimate business in the area.

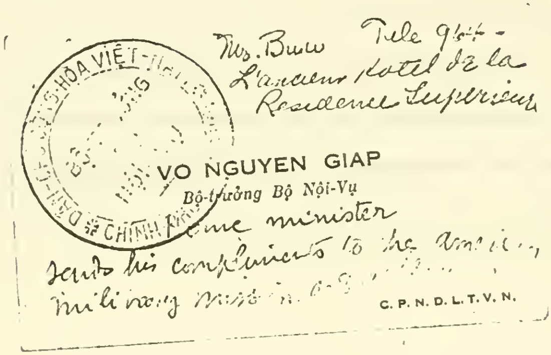
F. M. SMALL
Major, AGD

(Dictated but not read.)

SKETCH MAP showing position, and routes leading to position, where Lt Col DEWEY, U S Army, met his death.


To Go[illegible]
Parley for Lt. Col. DEWEY's body.
Route of Lt. Col. Dewey's Jeep.
Concealed L.M.G.
A.- Road Block - point of Am[illegible]
Lt. Col. DEWEY killed.
Hedge
To Airfield
GOLF
COURSE
Large house used by
Annamites during action.
O.S.S. H.Q.
Japanese Guard Hu[illegible]
I.S.L.D.
W/T Stn.
Partial road blocks.
Partial road blocks.
Rue Mac Mahon
To SAIGON
TOWN
Route of other Relief Party
Rue Paul Blanchy

III. SECRET INTELLIGENCE BRANCH (S.I.) REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE VIET MINH



Mr. Buw Tele 964-
L'ancien Hotel de la
Residence Superieur

VO NGUYEN GIAP
Bộ-trưởng Bộ Nội-Vụ

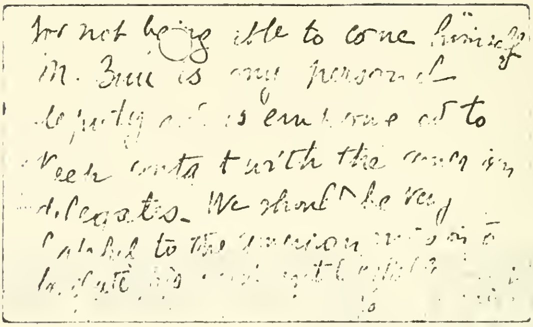
Home minister
sends his compliments to the Americ[illegible]
military mission [illegible]

C. P. N. D. L. T. V. N.

Mr. Buw Tele 964-
L'ancient Hotel de la
Residence Superieur

Home minister sends his compliments to the American military

mission and apologizes



for not being able to come himself
M. Buu is my personal
deputy and is empowered to
keep contact with the American
delegates. We should be very
grateful to the American [illegible]
[illegible]

for not being able to come himself. M. Buw is my personal deputy and is empowered to keep contact with the American delegates. We should be very grateful to the American mission to facilitate his work until establishment of official relations.

Vo nguyen Giap

5 Sept. 45
Via Trans. Bur

Fellow Countrymen !

The Vietnamese people heartily welcome the allied forces which are entering our territory in order to disarm the Japanese.

However, we are determined to oppose the moving in of the French elements, because their dark aim is to reestablish the French rule over our Fatherland.

Fellow Countrymen !

At the present moment a few Frenchmen have managed to filter into our territory, The Government expects every man to prepare himself to fight for our liberty and indépendence.

Président HoChiMinh

HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES CHINA THEATRE
SI BRANCH
APO 627

19 September 1945

Subject: Interview with Bao Dai, former emperor of Annam

To : Chief of Intelligence Division, OSS, China Theatre

1. At Hanoi, during the week of the 10th of September, 1945, I had an interview with Bao Dai, former emperor of Annam, at which Ho Chi Minh, the president of the Provisional Government of Viet Nam, and Prince Souphanouvong, the brother of the king of Laos, were present. The interview was on a friendly, unofficial basis, as a result of an invitation from Ho Chi Minh.

2. Bao Dai, during the interview, stated that he had volintarily abdicated, and was not coerced by the Provisional Government. He said that he would no longer see his people oppressed, and that, approving the nationalistic action of the Viet Minh, he therefore abdicated as an example to his people. He said that his great hope was that the people of Viet Nam could gain the independence they so ardently desire, and that he would rather live as a private citizen with a free people than rule a nation of slaves.

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES CHINA THEATRE
SI BRANCH
APO 627

19 September 1945

Subject: Interview with Prince Souphanouvong of Laos

To : Chief of Intelligence Division, CSS, China Theatre

1. At Hanoi, during the week of the 10th of September, 1945, I had an interview in the study of the Palais du Resident Superieur, with Prince Souphanouvong, brother of the king of Laos. Former emperor Bao Dai, and President Ho Chi Minh were also present.

2. Thus far, the view generally , is that Laos is remaining aloof from the Viet Minh government. The prince said first of all that this was not true, and that he was in Hanoi to make arrangements with Ho Chi Minh to support the Viet Nam government. He said that the people of Laos, although they previously have had trouble with the Annamese, were now generally in sympathy with the revolutionary movement. He said that he would do all in his power to aid Viet Nam in its attempts at independence, and that he would also do all possible to make a lasting agreement and sympathy between the government of Viet Nam and Laos. He sent to his people a message of what he was doing in Hanoi, and that he should never return to his country until it, as the rest of Indo-China was free. He said that he would no longer watch his people be exploited, and that he was personally in full agreement with Ho Chi Minh and the government and ideals of the people of Viet Nam.

HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES CHINA THEATRE
SI BRANCH
APO 627

19 September 1945

Subject: Interview with Ho Chi Minh

To : Chief of Intelligence Division,OSS,China Theatre

1. At Hanoi, during the week of the 10th of September, I, the undersigned, met and talked to Ho Chi Minh, the President of the Provisional Government of Viet Nam. I had known Mr. Ho for almost four months, having met him upon parachuting into Indo-China at Chu Chu. As a result, my meetings in Hanoi were merely a renewal of acquaintanceship, and all the talks were on a strictly friendly and unofficial basis, as was the luncheon I took with him and his cabinet. Six members of the Provisional Government were present.

2. Mr. Ho continually affirmed that he is not a rabid revolutionary, but merely a man who desires autonomy for his people. He said that he realizes fully the dangers and obstacles his people face in their fight for independence, and he knows that it is not to be obtained quickly and easily. He stated that assuredly the French will try to return in force, but hopes that they will be willing to settle peacefully the affair, and will respect the rights and hopes of his people. He also stated that he is sure bloodshed will ensue, however, if they forcefully try to impose again the regime of former days. He said that he does not desire bloodshed or revolution if it can be avoided, and will do everything in his power to negotiate peacefully with the French. However, if this cannot be brought about, he said that he and his people will fight. He assured me that,if that is necessary, his people are prepared for a long struggle of ten or twenty years, and are willing to fight for the freedom,not of their own, but of future generations.

3. Concerning the United States, Mr. Ho said that he asks nothing, but looks hopefully in that direction for moral support. He expressed admiration fob the Atlantic Charter, as representative of the freedom-loving spirit of the American people, and presumed that "freedom for all peoples" included freedom for the Annamese people. Therefore, he expressed his anxiety to have the United States Government and people know the facts of the former French regime in Indo-China, and the aspirations, actions, and determination of its native peoples at the moment. He feels certain that if the people of the United States had this knowledge, their moral support would be assured. He said,"This is all I ask, that news of Indo-China be given to the world".

4. Concerning internal affairs, Mr. Ho stated that he was fully aware of the great difficulties his people face, the difficulties of famine, education, reconstuction, finance, world politics,etc., made especially dificult by the dearth of men experienced in governmental capacities. He said that though the struggle would be difficult, his people were willing to endure it and were capable of settling their problems satisfactorily.

5. My personal opinion is that Mr. Ho Chi Minh is a brilliant and capable man, completely sincere in his opinions. I believe that when he speaks, he speaks for his people, for I have travelled throughout Tonkin province, and found that in that area people of all classes are imbued with the same spirit and determination as their leader.

HEADQUARTERS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES CHINA THEATER
SI BRANCH
APO 627

20 September 1945

Subject: Report on the Provisional Government, FIC

To : Chief of Intelligence Division, OSS, China Theatre

1. Background during Japanese occupation
   a. The Viet Minh who were fighting against the French sent a delegation to the French showing their willingness to forget differences in order to fight the common enemy, the Japanese. The French refused. The Viet Minh took to the hills and continued fighting. (Source:

   b. When the French left, they committed atrocities against Annamese political prisoners, example, gassing at Cao Bang. (Source:

   c. Bao Dai, former emperor of Annam, who worked with the French and also the Japanese when they arrived, later turned to Viet Minh. (Source:

   d. The Viet Minh policy, during the Japanese occupation, was not to harm French in Indo-China, but merely to escort them to the Chinese border or to safety. (Source:

   e. The Viet Minh continued fighting the Japanese by bullet, propaganda, and evacuation. The Japanese would enter a village from which everything transportable had been removed, when they advanced, they would be farther and farther from food, then the Viet Minh would attack. (Source:

2. Forming of Provisional Government
   The Provisional Government is an outgrowth of the controlling forces in the military resistance. Mr. Ho Chi Minh has been supreme commander for a long while, and his most trusted men gradually assumed positions of accepted prominence. The leaders are the leaders of the revolutionary activity streching

over a long period of years. How the actual posts of government were chosen, except that of president, I do not know, but the presidency was offered unanimously. (Source:

3. Structure of Government

The governmental structure is that of successive responsibility. In each village is a man who, for the welfare and conduct of his village, is responsible to the man who heads the district. Many of the former mandarins and administrators with experience in such affairs are now working with the Viet Minh in the same capacities. This system grows successively until the presidency is reached. There is apparently no check upon the cabinet or presidency only a mutual sense of responsibility. (Source:

Bao Dai, the former emperor of Annam, has now been accepted in an advisory capacity, and as an example for propaganda purposes by the Provisional Government of Viet Nam. (Sources:

Bao Dai told me that he abdicated voluntarily as an example to his people.

4. Political parties involved

a. Viet Minh- a coalition party combining Viet Nam, Communist, and almost all other parties. It is also known as League pour l'Independence de l'IndoChine. The correct name of the party is Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh. (Sources:

b. Viet Nam- the second party of importance in FIC, ostensibly part of Viet Minh, but supporting Bao Dai on the side. More sympathetic towards Chinese than Viet Minh. (Sources: ________

c. Communist party- now part of Viet Minh, not very important but troublesome. Most incidents come from the youth in this party. (Source:

d. Dai Viet- Japanese sponsered youth. Troublesome along propaganda lines, but not powerful. (Source

5. Finance

Receiving aid from Chinese groups possibly. Possibility of some aid from Russia, but doubtful. (Source:

6. Army and Police force

   a. The Army of the present government is a peasant and civilian army with many former soldiers in the French army. For the most part, they are poorly armed. They have French, American, Chinese, Japanese weapons and ancient flint-locks. They have Bren and machine guns but nothing larger. The spirit of the Army, however, is very good, a strong determination to achieve independence ay any cost. They have no parade ground discipline, but obey without question and immediately the orders of their superiors. (Source:

   b. The police force is also a civilian one and is normally efficient and well-behaved. (Source:

7. Internal Relations

   a. Education- Viet Minh is already educating its people. I have attended schools in the jungle and in villages. In our camp, school continued in the free hours of the evening. Plans for future education are under way. (Source:

   b. Reconstruction- the Government of Viet Nam hopes for foreign enterprise, capital, and technical aid. It is looking particularly to the United States. (Source:

   c. Government posts- ther is a dearth of trained men, but Mr. Ho feels sure that though difficult, the job can be accomplished. (Source:

   d. Cambodian question- relations with Cambodia are excellent. (Source:

   e. Laotian question- Prince Souphanouvong, brother of the king of Laos, is in Hanoi to confer with Ho Chi Minh. He is there to establish close collaboration between Laos and the Viet Nam government. (Source:

8. Foreign Relations

   a. France- the government knows the French will return. If French respect their rights, will negotiate peacefully, but if the French try to impose the former regime, the VietNamese will fight continually. (Sources:

b. China- Viet Nam fears China's intentions in view of one thousand years of Chinese domination. They also fear Chinese economic stranglehold, but are willing to co-operate and hope for the best.(Source:

c. England- the Annamese respect England's integrity as a nation, but fear that she will aid French in imperialistic policies. They want English friendship and commerce. (Source:

d. Russia- the Viet Minh is using Communistic mwth methods in many things, such as the living of revolutionaries in the jungle, and in social situations, but does not politically embrace Russian Communism. (Source:

e. United States- Viet Nam looks to America for moral support in their struggle, almost expect it. The Annamese are anxious that the United States should know the situation in FIC before the war, and the actions and the aspirations they have at the moment.(Source:

9. Future Plans of the Provisional Government
   a. They plan to resist the French continually
   b. A national election isplanned when practicable.
   c. If people want him, Bao Dai will be reinstated
   d. The choice of the government and of its leaders willrest entirely with the people.(Sources:

ATTACHMENTS: 1.Annamite newspapers ✓
2.Declaration of Independence ✓
3.Lettre aux amis d'Hanoi ✓

[Attachments not printed]

TO: Indiv. | SOURCE:
FROM: Swift | SUB-SOURCE: As stated
AREA: French Indo-China | DATE OF REPORT: 17 Oct. 45 OCT 18 1945
SUBJECT: Political Information | DATE OF INFO.: 25 Sept.- 15 Oct. 45

The revolutionary activity in Indo-China at the present time is the outgrowth of the secret societies which have existed in Annam since the French authority has been established. The first troubles were at Hue, in June,1885, when about twenty thousand Annamese attacked the French troops of General de Courcy, while king Ham Nghi of Annam fled from his palace. The scholar, Phan Boi Chau, secretly formed a group to restore the throne to the young prince, Cuong De. Phan Boi Chau offered the prince to the Annamese revolutionaries as the symbol of the tradition destroyed by the French.

After the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, Phan Boi Chau went to Japan where he founded the Viet Nam Duy Tan Hoi or Society for the Modernization of Annam, with the object of sending students to Japan, who were destined to form the beginnings of a revolutionary army. He also wrote anti-French pamphlets, and directed revolts in the center of Annam.

After the treaty between France and Japan in 1907, the prince, Cuong De, and his mentor, Phan Boi Chau, went to south China where they organized in 1912 the Viet Nam Quang Phuc Hoi, or Association for the Restoration of the Country. This group directed revolts in Hanoi and Saigon, and in the famous revolutionary district of Yen Bay in Annam. In 1920, the power of Phan Boi Chau was broken; he was arrested in 1925, then later released. He ended his life quietly, and old man passed by his times.

In 1929, Nguyen Ai Quoc fouded the Annamese Communist Party, several associations grouped to-gether with a common aim of opposing French domination. In it were, first, le Parti Revolutionaire du Nouvel Annam, founded by ancient revolutionaries who were political prisoners in the pentitentiary at Poulo Condore. Second, l'Association Nguyen An Ninh of about eight hundred persons of the poor peasantry, and small proprietors. After some attempts at revolutionary activity, he was condemned to prison in 1929. His group broke up and joined the ranks of l'Association des Jeunesses Revolutionnaire Annamite, created in 1927 by Nguyen Ai Quoc to aid in resisting French domination, and to establish a democratic government. The plan had two parts: first, the liberation of the country, and then aid to other peoples still under colonial domination; and secondly, an alliance with Russia. The third goup, the Annamite Communist Party, was the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang or le Parti Nationalist Annamite, founded in Tonkin in 1927 by a group of young students. It was this organization which made the mutiny at the garrison of Yen Bay, inflaming the whole of Indo-China. It provoked severe French reprisals which disorganized the party for a short time, but its members lost their identity in the larger Communist Party.

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7 Nguyen Ai Quoc, also known as Ly Thuy, and now as Ho Chi Minh, president of the Provisional Government of Viet Nam, born in 1892 in the province of Nghe An in Annam, a province famous for its revolutionary actitity. His father was a scholar who occupied an official position, but who was alcoholic and through this weakness, became destitute. He grew up to fix the responsibility for his father's unfortunate experiences on the mandarinate, whom he criticized for their haughty and excellent living in comparison with that of the general population, and whom he accused of servility and greed in their relations with the representatives of the French governmenn. During this time, his father earned his living by giving leesons in Chineze characters and by directing classes for illiterates.

When he was nineteen years old, in 1911, Nguyen Ai Quoc left his home for Saigon where he embarked as a sailor on the ship, Latouche-Treville. He visited America and England, and finally disembarked in France. In Paris, he continued his studies himself, particularly in political and social economy. When the World War was over in 1918, he wrote a pamphlet,"Cahier des Revindications du Peuple Annamite", which he addressed to M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and to President Wilson. At this time, he also frequented the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, and was initiated into the freemasons. In 1920, with Mr. Rappoport, he attended the National Congress of the French Communist Party. He created an anti-French inter-colonial union, and in 1922, he founded the newspaper, Paria, in which he denounced imperialism. In 1923, he went to Moscow as the representative for Indo-China at the International Congress of Peasants. He stayed in Russia, met Borodin, and studied at the famous Comintern school. In 1925, he went to Canton under the name of Ly Thuy, to work in the press bureau of the Russian consulate, and there he founded the "Ligue des Peuples Opprimes et l'Association des Jeunesses Revolutionnaires Annamites."

In 1927, came the coup d'etat of Chiang Kai Shek, and Nguyen Ai Quoc fled with Borodin and General Gallen. He travelled through Europe, and finally returned to the Orient to Siam, where he remained as a refugee while numbers of young revolutionaries from Vinh and Ha Tinh gathered around him.

At this time in Annam, there were two principal anti-French groups, les Jeunesses Revolutionnaires; and le Parti Revolutionnaire du Nouvel Annam. The first was in a rather difficult position, its leader, Nguyen Ai Quoc, having had to flee from Canton, and his two lieutenants,Hong Son and Hotung Man, having been imprisoned. Hotung Man, through Chinese contacts,was released several weeks later, and with his comrades, Lam Duc Thu, Truong Van Lenh, and Quang Dat, directed the Association and achieved some success with their propaganda. The other group, le Parti du Nouvel Annam, sent him delegates, asking for a fusion of their parties. He proselyted the delegates who in turn went out for him to contact students, profes sors, etc. and no fusion was effected.

In the beginning of January, 1929, Genral Li Yan King, commander of the school of Whampoa took action against the Annamite immigrants. Thirteen cadets were arrested, and Hotung Man and Le Quang Dat were imprisoned until 15 August, 1929. Meanwhile, Hong Son was liberated at the end of December, 1928, and he continued to direct the association. On 1 May, 1929, the annual congress of the Association des Jeunesses Revolutionnaires Annamites was opened, and the three delegates from Tonkin suggested that the name of the group be changed to the Indo-Chinese Communist Party. This was the origin of the present Communist party. It started to write pamphlets denouncing the leaders of l'Association des Jeunesses and gained ground from Tonkin to Cambodia, where it was joined by about five thoudand adherents of l'Association Nguyen An Ninh. It made such rapid progress that the "Jeunesses" , to counteract it, formed a sedret Communist group from the cream of its own organization. Thus, in 1929, there were three rival Communist groups co-existent in Annam. First, le Parti Communist Indo-Chinoise- Dong Duong Cong San Dang, the remnant of the Association des Jeunesses. Second, le Parti Communist Annamite-Viet Nam Cong San Dang, the secret party formed within the"Jeunesses" Third, le Groupement Communist Indo-Chinoise- Dong Duong Cong San Lieu Doan, made of the Parti du Nouvel Annam. The impasse between the Indo-Chinese Communist Party and the Annamite Communist Party was finally broken by the former's suggestion that Nguyen Ai Quoc lead them both. The central committee of the Association des Jeunesses sent a delegate to Siam to recall him. Nguyen Ai Quoc embarked for Kowloon, arriving at the beginnign of 1929. He took over direction of affairs, and called to Kowloon delegates from all Communist groups, told them to fuse, and to obey his orders. The Oriental Bureau- Communist Headquarters in Shanghai- wanted the three parties to join the federation created at singapore for southeast Asia? Nguyen Ai Quoc objected. The solution was that the three [illegible] parties fused into the Annamese Communist Party, a national party with the name of one of the former three, and which was directly connected with the Bureau d'Orient. Nguyen Ai Quoc gave to this new national unified party a provisional organization with proletariat direction, and with its center in Indo-China. Under his direction, syndicates of students and workers ~~wer~~ were orgaized, and he founded the Annamese section of the "Ligue contre l'Imperialiasme et l'Oppression Coloniale." This organization was destined to bring into his party many anti-French people who had thus far belonged to no political group. In Cochin-China, he organized syndicates among workers in the Franco-Asiatic Petrol Co., in the arsenal, in the electric plants of Cholon and Saigon, etc. In Tonkin, the cotton and silk mills of Haiphong, and elsewhere were organized. In Annam, the same thing occurred in the railroad companies, the forest service, and the schools.

In April, 1931, at Hong Kong, he came under the surveillance of the police, while carrying on a correspondence between the Bureau d'Orient and the central committee of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party. His capture was difficult however, for he left for Canton where, on Chinese territory, it was impossible to arrest him. The Indo-Chinese surete, during an investigation in Saigon, found papers saying that he intended to return to Saigon. The British police were informed, and he was arrested by them on 6 June,1931, during his passage to Hong Kong. He was condemned to two years imprisonment in Hong Kong, but appealed the case to London.

After his prison sentence, Ho Chi Minh was released through the efforts of Mr. Loewnsby, an English attourney. Under this name, he went to Fukien, where he stayed some months, then to Shanghai, and finally back to Indo-China. During his imprisonment, and thereafter until about 1942, he and the League were acting underground. In this year, he went to China as the representative of the Viet Minh League. Immediately upon his crossing the frontier, he was imprisoned by the Chinese for thirteen months. After his release at Liuchow, he went to Kunming to contact the Chinese and Americans, and his own underground organization. While there, he did some translating for the Office of War Information. From Kunming, after having contacted General Chennault, he flew to Poseh and went from there, with an ACAS team to Cao Bang. From this time, he worked with this team and its organization, establishing a network all over Tonkin province to aid American pilots who fell in French Indo-China. This work continued until the end of the war, but an additional Americal group started work with him against the Japanese in July, 1945, when two groups of Office of Strategic Services personnel parachuted to his headquarters at Chu Chu. These two groups, with their Annamese troops, were engaged in gathering intelligence, and in Commando operations against roads, bridges, and all lines of communication between Langson and Hanoi. In early August, at the Chu Chu headquarters, a national conference was held, and Ho Chi Minh was elected chairman of the Central Executive Committee. This committee was also a tentative provisional government, and most of its members did take office. After the Japanese submission, he went to Hanoi, arriving there 31 August, 1945. He took a public oath of office as president of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Viet Nam on 2 September,in Hanoi.

The main opposition to the Provisional Government of Viet Nam comes from the group headed by Nguyen Hai Than. This gentleman , now about seventy years old , was born at Ha Dong or Nam Dinh. His family was of the intelligentia, and he received a good classical Chinese education. After the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, he was a member of the group which went to Japan with Phan Boi Chau. On leaving Japan , he went to China , making his living by teaching and by his knowledge necromancy. Little is known of his activity from this time until the outbreak of the war in 1941, except that he was at Whampoa academy in Canton as an employee sometime between 1926 and 1929.

After the Japanese occupation of Indo-China, the Annamese in China, the bulk of whom were refugees from Langson, formed a league, of which Nguyen Hai Than was a member. This league accomplished little however, since therewas internal dissension. Later, when the Japanese surrended, Nguyen Hai Than, in Ting Hsi at the time, joined with the Chinese in their march for the occupation of Indo-China. Here he was joined by Vi Van Dinh, former mandarin of Langson, and by other members of the mandarinate and their adherents, and also by various former pro-Japanese and pro-French groups.

The political situation, as it stands at the moment, is that Nguyen Hai Than, inspite of public denials from Chungking, and also denials from General Ho Yeng Chen and General Lu Han in Hanoi, is being supported by the Chinese unofficially. He is seen entering Chinese headquarters almost daily, and there is direct telephone connection between his private office and that of General Lu Han. This Chinese support of Nguyen Hai Than is weakening, but still exists. The position of Ho Chi Minh and the Provisional Governemtn is becoming precarious, because, although he is supported by the great mass of the population, the wealthy and the intelligentis of the country favor Nguyen Hai Than. At present, this is extremely dangerous because the Provisional Government is almost entirely without funds.

PERSONAL OBSERVATION

I, ____ ____ can certify to the fact that the great mass of the population supports Ho Chi Minh and his party, and to the anti-Japanese action in which they have engaged. I have seen men who were wounded inambuscades of Japanese troops, have treated their wounds, and have talked to them about their experiences and aspirations. In travelling through Tonkin, every village flew the Viet Minh flag, and had armed soldiers many with Japanese weapons taken in raids. The women and children were also organized, and all were enthusiastic in their support. The important thing is that all were cognizant of the fact that independence was not to be gained in a day, and were prepared to continue their struggle for years. In the rural areas, I found not one instance of opposition to the Viet Minh, even among former government officials. In Hanoi, the situation is somewhat different. Cpl. Robert Callahan and I both saw how well the majority of the people follow the orders of Ho Chi Minh and the Provisional Government, but also saw that some of the wealthy merchants and former high Annamese officials favor Nguyen Hai Than. Some of these former mandarins are royalists, and desire the return of the imperial house. However, Bao Dai, former emperor of Annam, told me personally that he does not desire to return to the throne, that his abdication was voluntary, and that he is in complete accord with the present Provisional Government and its aspirations. At the same time as Bao Dai's statement, Ho Chi Minh said that although he formerly favored Communist ideals, he now realized that such ideals were impracticable for his country, and that his policy now was one of republican nationalism, in which decision rested with the people. If they wanted an imperial house, without power such as that in England, he and his party had no objections, and that is was entirely for the people to decide.

ATTACHMENTS:1) List of present cabinets members, their positions, and former political affiliations.

2) List of revolutionary parties of Indo-China.

ATTACHMENT 1

Government Officials

Source:

7 Oct. 45

1. The following gives the names, offices, and former political affiliations of the most important officials in the present Provisional Government.

Name	Office or Ministry	Former Political Ties
Ho chi Minh	President	Nationalist
Vo nguyen Giap	Interior	Communist
Tran huy Lieu	Propaganda	Ass. Cultural
Vu dinh Hoe	Education	Democrat
Nguyen To	National Safety	No Party
Nguyen manh Ha	Economics	Ass. Catholic
Pham van Dong	Finance	Communist
Duong duc Hien	Youth	Democrat
Lo van Hien	Public Work	Socialist
Vu trong Khanh	Justice	No Party
Dao trong Kim	Communications	" "
Pham ngoc Thach	Medicine	" "
Cu huy Can	No Official Post	Democrat
Nguyen van Xuan	" "	Nationalist
Chu van Tan	National Defense	No Party

ATTACHMENT 2

Political Parties

Source:

7 Oct. 45

1. The following list includes the parties which existed when ~~before~~ the Viet Minh took over the government. These parties are listed inorder of importance according to the number of members. Information given about the parties includes : i) Translation of party name

ii) Party platform

iii) Organs of Propaganda

iv) Party leader(when available)

A. Nong dan cuu quoo hoi

i) Agricultural association for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Sufficient oultivateable land

b. Improvement of the agricultural system
Reduction
c. ~~Abolition~~ of land tax

d. Reduction of internal taxes

iii) Duoi giac nuoc (Thanh Hoa)

Hiep(Ba giang)

Viet nam doc lap (Cao bang)

Nuoc nam moi (Khu Giai phong)

B. Thanh nien cuu quoc hoi

i) Youth association for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Free development of the intelleual and moral faculties

b. Freedom of circulation

~~c. Suppression of recent studies~~

d. Modification of the curricula

iii) Hon nuoc (Hanoi)

C. Cong nhan cuu quoc hoi

i) Association of workmen for the national salvation

ii) Platform

- a. Increase in salaries
- b. Reduction of working hourd
- c. Social insurance
- d. Improvement of material and intellectual life
- e. Workingmens' legislation
- f. Fixed minimum salaries

iii) Lao dong

D. Phu nu cuu quoc doan

i) Womens league for the national salvation

ii) Platform

- a. Female emancipation form the feudal yoke
- b. Equal rights of men

iii) None before August

Now: Gai nuoc nam

iv) Leader : Mlle. Tam Kinh

E. VietNam dan chu dang

i) Democratic party of VietNam

ii) Platform

- a. New democracy

iii) Doc lap

iv) Leader: Duong duc Hien

F. VietNam c quoc hoi

   i) VietNamese association for the national salvation

   ii) Platform

      a. Democratic liberties (Reducton of taxes)

   iii) VietNam

G. Thieu nien tien phong doi

   i) Miners group for the national salvation

   ii) Platform

      a. Sufficient schools for them

      b. Development of the moral, intellectual, and physical faculties

   iii) None

H. Nhi dong cuu vong hoi

   i) Youth association fot the national salvation

   ii) Platform

      a. Proper education

   iii) None

I. Thuong nhan cuu quoc hoi

   i) Businessmens association for the national salvation

   ii) Platform

      a. Freedom of trade

      b. Freedom of emigration

      c. change ~~Suppression~~ of patents regulations

   iii) None

J. Dong duong cong san dang

   i) Communist party of Indo-China

   ii) Platform

      a. Improvement of the life of the workingmen

b. Universal suffrage

iii) Co giai phong

iv) Leader: Pham van dong

K. Binh si cuu quoc hoi

i) Military association for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Improvement of military life and education

iii) Ken goi linh

Chien dau

L. Van hoa cuu quoc hoi

i) Cultural association for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Abolition of the ~~mysteriousness~~ governmental secrecy practiced by the French

b. Creation of a new culture

iii) Tien Phong

iv) Leader: Nguyen huu Dang

M. Vien chuc cuu quoc hoi

i) Association of officials and employees for the national salvation

ii) Platfrom

a. Improvement of the material life

b. Fair placement aacording to capacity and aptitude

iii) None

N. ~~Linh vien cuu quoc hoi~~

~~i) Student association for the national salvation~~

~~ii) Platform~~

~~a. For youth~~

iii) None

N O. Phu lao cuu quoc hoi

i) Association of old people for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Support for the aged

iii) None

OB. Viet Nam quoc dan dang

i) Democratic group

ii) Democratic liberties

Republican regime

iii) None

iv) Leaders:

Nguyen van Xuan

2. The following parties are those which were pro-Japanese

A. Viet nam quoc dan dang

i) This party was formed after 9 March 45, and afterwards united with the Dai viet quoc gia lien minh under the name of Vietnam quoc dan Hoi. After the Viet Minh came into power, one of ~~its~~ the leaders of the party, Nhuong Tong, fled to China to ally himself with Nguyen Hai Than , leader of the pro-Chinese party, Vietnam cach menh Dong minh hoi. He took the name of Dr. Pham Tran after he fled.

ii) Leaders: Nguyen the Nghiep

Nguyen ngoc Son

Nhuong Tong(Hoang pham Tran)

Nguyen Khac Trach

B. Dai viet quoc xa (also known as)

Dai viet quoc gia lien minh "

Viet nam quoc dan hoi

i) This party was founded in 1942. It had no system or organization and was not held in much esteem by the people. Its newspaper was Haiphong nhat bao

ii) The leaders were: Pham dinh Cuong

Truong anh Tu

C. Viet nam phuc quoc dong minh hoi

i) This party was founded in September, 1940, after the Japanese invasion at Langson, but never had much organization. After the Franco-Japanese armistice at Lagon, the party nolonger received aid from the Japanese, and was easily suppressed by the French. The survivig members fled to China.

ii) Leader : Tran trung Lap

D. Viet nam thanh nien ai quoc hoi

i) This party, founded after 9 March 45, received arms and munitions notably from the Japanese. They participated in pro-Japanese activities and espionage.

ii) Leader Vo van Cam

E. Dai viet dan chinh

i) Party was founded in 1941. It has been suppressed by the French and is now dissolved. The leader has fled to China.

ii) Leader : Nguyen tuong Tam

3. The following are parties which are now in the Viet Minh which were formed after the Viet Minh took over the power.

A. Cong thuong cuu qoc hoi

i) Association of businessmen and industrialists for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Interests of the above

B. Linh vien cuu quoc hoi

i) Association of students fothe national salvation

ii) Platform: Youth interests

C. Cuu binh si cuu quoc

i) Association of former military for the national salvation

ii) Platform

a. Pro-military legislation

IV. STRATEGIC SERVICE UNIT "INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION" REPORTS FROM FRENCH INDOCHINA

The S.S.U. assumed some of the intelligence and record keeping functions of the O.S.S. when the latter was disbanded in September 1945. Although the names of the sources have been deleted, the reports from Hanoi presumably come from Frank White.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington, D.C.

Intelligence Dissemination Number A–65936

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Military and Political Information.
Origin: Saigon.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource:
Evaluation: A–2.

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Date of info: 28 February 1946.
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Attachments.

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1. On 27 February, about 100 French troops mostly from the 2nd Armored and Colonial Infantry Divisions, in more than 3 hours' rioting burned and sacked the residence of Paul Valere, Editor of the Socialist Weekly, La Justice. The immediate cause of the attack was the editorial which the Socialist weekly, always sharply critical of the conduct of French soldiers, published on the morning of 27 February, defending its stand and reminding the troops that they were paid by the Government of France of which the Socialist Party is the keystone. Sale of this issue was halted around 18 hours when 2nd Division troops seized papers from newsboys and cafe readers and burned them in the main square in Saigon. Mobs of soldiers then wrecked the shop and printing plant in which the paper was published and destroyed copies of the new Diocesan organ, *Information Catholique* and some 20,000 leaflets which were being printed for distribution in Hanoi by the French Army.

2. At the same time, the apartment of the leading Socialist, Metter, was ransacked and he was dragged from his sick bed and beaten in the main street in Saigon. The attack on Metter was apparently instigated by a lieutenant of Spahis (North African native cavalry), who denounced him as the instigator of the resolution printed on 24 February in the weekly Annamese language supplement *Tuong Lai* which called for recognition of Viet Nam independence and immediate cessation of hostilities. As the lieutenant and soldiers dragged Metter from his apartment, rioting troops shouted "Vive Le Clerc, Death to the Communists, Thorez to the post!" smashing the windows of the apartment and looting and burning its contents. Despite protestations, Metter, who it is understood was imprisoned 2½ years under Vichy administration for resistance activity in Indo-China, was badly beaten and only saved from lynching by last minute intervention.

3. The rioting occurred while the streets were posted with Military Police guarding the arrival of d'Argenlieu from Paris at approximately 23 hours. Some observers believe that the coincidence of d'Argenlieu's arrival and the riot was not accidental but intended to emphasize Army protest against any possible moderation of French terms to Viet Nam Government. It is the general opinion that the rioting, if not on orders from French Army headquarters, at least had the open sanction of high-ranking officers, many of whom were present and expressed approbation.

4. There is a tendency in some quarters to overemphasize the coincidence of the riots and d'Argenlieu's arrival. Many of the troops involved have no real consciousness of the significance of d'Argenlieu's trip to Paris and most are certainly not anxious to continue a fight which will result in the shedding of their blood.

5. The following are believed to be the basic causes of the demonstrations:

   a. Criticism of the Army by the newspaper *La Justice* which in particular in one edition replied to General Le Clerc (see introduction to paragraph 5 in dessemination [deleted] with personal praise for him but pointed out that most of the Regular Army in Saigon was interested in political and financial gain, and also referred to the poor record of the Regular Army who joined Vichy during the war. (See also paragraph 2 in dissemination.)

b. The civilian population is antagonistic toward anyone who suggests a compromise with Viet Minh or accuses French Indo-China French of wartime collaboration with the Japanese or Vichy. Nearly all the demonstrators were unthinking anti-Leftists.

6. The degree to which the riots had official military sanction is not yet known but General Le Clerc is allegedly concerned. However no positive action was taken to quell the disturbances.

7. Former "legonnaires" favor cessation of *La Justice* because each issue demands priority action against wartime collaborators.

8. The Socialist-Marxist Party, which comprises only 130 members including a few open-minded old-timers, is responsible for *La Justice.*

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–65963

Country: French Indo-China.	Original Rpt.
Subject: Political Information.	Date of info: 4 March 1946.
Origin: Hanoi.	Date of rpt.: 6 March 1946.
Theatre: Indo-China.	Distributed: 8 March 1946.
Source: [delete].	Confirmation: Supplement.
Subsource: Unstated.	Reference.
Evaluation: B–3.	No. of pages.
	Attachments.

On 1 March Nguyen Hai Tan, Vice President of the new Annamese Government (see dissemination [deleted]) disappeared after unsuccessful attempts to resign. Ho Chi Minh claims that his whereabouts are unknown. On 2 March the Annamese Congress adjourned after approving the proposed cabinet. On 4 March the cabinet held its first meeting. Ho Chi Minh claims that they offered the presidency to Bao Dai, former Emperor of the Annam, but that Annamese leaders feared a change would undermine the morale of the people.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–65963a

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Military Information.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource: As Stated.
Evaluation: As Stated.

Original Rpt.
Date of info: As stated.
Date of rpt.: 6 March 1946.
Distributed: 8 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
Reference.
No. of Pages.
Attachments.

Note: See dissemination [delete] which reports the attempted French landing at Haiphong on 6 March.

4 March 1946

F–2 1. On 5 March 10,000 French troops will arrive at Haiphong and on 6 March they will disembark. About 9 March 6,000 more will land. No air invasion is expected because of fear of Chinese reaction. Sub source: [delete]

F–3 2. The French did not tell General Lu Han of the date of landing until 4 March. Landing at Haiphong will be forbidden by the Chinese because it will involve Chinese troops in clashes and will hinder the withdrawal of Chinese Forces through Hon Cay. The Chinese will insist that the French go back and land at Tourane so that Chinese withdrawal can proceed smoothly. Bloodshed and scorched earth appear likely unless pressure is brought on the French to negotiate intelligently with the Annamese. Sub source: [delete]

5 March 1945

F–3 3. The Chinese have been forced to agree to the French landing at Haiphong on 6 March. (See above paragraph, information as of 4 March). Twelve planes of ammunition and weapons will arrive on 6 March for the Hanoi garrison and will be distributed immediately. North Indo-China will be returned to French control by 31 March but Chinese troops will not withdraw by that date. The date of withdrawal of Chinese troops is indefinite. The date for handing over Hanoi to the French is some time prior to 31 March. Sub source: Unstated.

F–3 4. First French troops landed at Haiphong will be motorized and equipped with United States vehicles and weapons. This will decrease the protection afforded by the American flag and there is a strong possibility that it will create resentment among the Annamese for Americans and in some cases may result in Annamese mistaking Americans for French. Sub source: Unstated.

F–3 5. On 4 March General Salan advised Ho Chi Minh as follows: Chinese plans for handing over cities and rural areas are extremely vague. The Chinese in Hanoi were caught unaware by the suddenness of French reoccupation. The French have 50 transport planes for ferrying troops to outlying points. The French may put the Hanoi garrison under the command of the Chinese temporarily. The French will assume control of Haiphong when all the contingent of 10,000 troops has disembarked. Hanoi will be handed over piecemeal. Chinese troops will protect overseas Chinese.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER (?)

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: French and Chinese Clashes.
Origin: Shanghai.
Theatre: China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource: Unstated.
Evaluation: B–3.

Original Rpt.
Date of info: 6 March 1946.
Date of rpt.: 6 March 1946.
Distributed: 6 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
No. of pages.
Attachments.

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1. French and Chinese forces are fighting at Haiphong as a result of French attempts to land. Two small Chinese gunboats were sunk by French naval fire. The Chinese are trying to negotiate (portion missing). The French Chief of Staff states that the Chinese opened fire on the French boats and that the French did not attempt to force a landing.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington, D.C.

Intelligence Dissemination Number A–66643

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Political Information.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [deleted].
Sub Source:
Evaluation: C–2.

Original Rpt.:
Date of info.: 17 March 1946.
Date of rpt.: 26 March 1946.
Distributed: 28 March 1946.
Confirmation: supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages: 2.
Attachments.

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1. Ho Chi Minh stated that he could not guarantee a peaceful reception to General Le Clerc's forces unless the French had demonstrated their intention by 20 March to carry out the conditions of the 6 March accord.

Field Comment: Since this report was delayed in transmission, [deleted] contains later information.

2. Ho Chi Minh accused the French of bad faith on the following counts: failure to open "immediate" negotiations with the Viet Nam Government, and continued action by French troops in Cochin China. As a result of these failures, demonstrations have been staged by Annamites and the Press is clamoring for the date to be set for independence parleys in Paris.

3. Sainteny informed source that Paris was too busy with other matters to fix the date.

4. Ho Chi Minh is obviously sincere in wishing to avoid trouble, but fears that the bad faith evidence by the French will weaken his hold on the people and strengthen the extremists, whom he describes as opportunists.

5. Ho's chief opponent is Vice-President Nguyen Hai Than, reported in dissemination [deleted] to have disappeared after unsuccessful attempts to resign as Vice-President of the new Annamese Government. Nguyen Hai Than is believed to be in the Moncay Province forming a hard-core resistance group of unspecified size. (See dissemination [deleted] paragraph 4). Ho Chi Minh is worried over Nguyen Hai Than's defection and also fears that the local rumor is true inasmuch as the latter controls a diehard group composed of several Annamite parties.

6. Despite French and British optimism, the situation remains highly volatile. French and Government posters throughout the city urge calmness and maintenance of order. However an Annamite newsman offered to show sources a secret well-fortified area of native houses.

7. The Annamite Press claims that the "Justice" incident in Saigon (see dissemination [deleted] was part of the French fascist program. Tonkinese contrary to their Saigon colleagues, have had an 8 months' propaganda diet of "independence or death", giving them ample time to make full preparations for their fight. During this period, arms and ammunitions were available from the Japanese and later from the Chinese.

8. At present it is impossible to speculate on the Chinese position, either their present status or their attitude in case of a show-down. Despite their knowledge that Haiphong is being looted, neither Ho Chi Minh nor Sainteny dare complain. The latter admits that French troops are still smarting from the Haiphong debarkation incident but is hopeful that the troops are satisfied with the official explanation that the shelling resulted from misunderstanding.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–66420

Country: French Indo-China.	Original Rpt.
Subject: Political Information.	Date of info: 17, 18 March 1946.
Origin: Hanoi.	Date of rpt.: 20 March 1946.
Theatre: Indo-China.	Distributed: 22 March 1946.
Source: [delete].	Confirmation: Supplement.
Sub Source: As stated.	No. of pages.
Evaluation: As stated.	Attachments.

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17 March 1946

F–3 1. A young female Annamese Viet Minh office worker unwittingly informed a high Chinese official that while on a propaganda mission last week to a village 30 kilometers from Hanoi, she encountered 1 Belgian, 1 Russian-Pole, 1 Swiss, and 1 unknown foreigner living in the village. *Sub source:* [delete]

18 March 1946

C–3 2. The Chinese are afraid to press the Annamese girl for further details for fear that she realize the importance of the information.

C–0. The Chinese think this is a Moscow Group operating with Ho Chi Minh despite the fact that Ho Chi Minh claims he is a non-communist. The Chinese are investigating. *Sub source:* [delete]

C–0 3. This incident may be used by Ho Chi Minh to strengthen Chinese determination to remain in French Indo-China, or it may be the cornerstone of a Ho Chi Minh-Moscow-Felix Gouin triangle which will shift into high gear as soon as French imperialists have been replaced. *Sub source:* [delete]

F–3 4. An Annamese reports that Nguyan Hai Than has recently been forming a resistance government at Moncay.

Washington Comment: Dissemination [delete] reported that Nguyen Hai Than, Vice-President of the new Annamese government, disappeared after unsuccessful attempts to resign.

C–0 5. Should the Ho Chi Minh-Moscow-Felix Gouin triangle materialize, it appears likely that Chinese Nationalists will be forced to encourage a resistance movement. *Sub source:* [delete]

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–66423

Country: French Indio-China.
Subject: French Troops Enter Hanoi.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource: Unstated.
Evaluation: F–2.

Original Rpt.
Date of info.: 18 March 1946.
Date of rpt.: 20 March 1946.
Distributed: 22 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages.
Attachments.

On 18 March, French troops entered Hanoi without incident. The city is abnormally quiet.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–66441

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Political and Military Information.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource:
Evaluation: C–3.

Original Rpt.
Date of info.: 19 March 1946.
Date of rpt.: 21 March 1946.
Distributed: 25 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages.
Attachments.

In an interview with source, General Le Clerc revealed the following opinions:

1. He expressed confidence that there would be no major Annamite resistance to French return, citing as evidence of successful negotiations his peaceful entry into Hanoi on 18 March. He says there is no truth in the rumor of fighting at Hongay.

2. French feeling is running high against the Chinese because of bombardment and looting but General Le Clerc states that he has taken measures to prevent such incidents. (See dissemination [delete])

Source Comment: French forces did not carry arms on the night of 18 March but their conduct has not been such as to lessen possible danger. See dessemination [delete])

3. General Le Clerc states that, in accordance with agreements signed with the Chinese, Chinese troops will begin withdrawal on 31 March, thus inferentially denying Yuen's statement that the French are anxious to have the Chinese remain at least a couple more months.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A-66610

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Political and Economic information.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource: As stated.
Evaluation: As stated.

Original Rpt.
Date of info.: 20 March 1946.
Date of rpt.: 26 March 1946.
Distributed: 27 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages: 2.
Attachments.

C–2 1. Contrary to rumors that his government presented an ultimatum to France demanding that the date be fixed for the beginning of the Paris independence negotiations, Ho Chi Minh now appears more confident of French sincerity than ever before. (See paragraph 1 in dissemination [delete].)

C–2 2. In a lengthy conversation with source, Ho Chi Minh stated that his government has made exhaustive effort to explain to Vietnamese its reason for signing an agreement with the French, and that mass meetings have been staged throughout the country to clarify the governmental point of view. These meetings, Ho Chi Minh believes, are largely responsible for the peace currently reigning.

C–2 3. He stated that both he and General Le Clerc, with whom he has had two cordial meetings, agree that Viet Nam's most immediate needs are peace and increased food production, and that the fact that there have been no incidents thus far is proof of the government's ability to control the people.

Source Comment: Ho Chi Minh is firmly convinced that what his country needs most in its struggle for independence is the sympathy and understanding of the American people.

C–2 4. He stated frankly that if the United States' State Department would publicly condone his signing of the accord of 6 March, his position would be immeasurably strengthened. The main reason he demanded that the independence negotiations be held in Paris was in order that the delegation might be in close contact with the United States embassy for "sympathy and technical advice".

C–2 5. In this connection, he fears that because of his widely advertised communist background America, Britain and China might be suspicious of his administration. He admits being a student of Marx but claims that Indo-China must have the practical support of capitalist countries for another 50 years before her productivity can be brought abreast of her needs.

C–2 6. While the food shortage is serious, he believes that far fewer will starve in Tonkin this year than last year when 2,000,000 starved to death chiefly because of Japanese requisitions, dyke damage and drought. He states that the government has undertaken an agricultural diversification program with emphasis on garden vegetables, which is greatly relieving the situation. Furthermore, even without French technical advice, most of the dykes will be repaired by the May planting season.

C–3 7. General Le Clerc states that the Chinese still refuse to make the Haiphong docks available to the French. Nevertheless, he privately feels that he is in a good position militarily in the event of Annamese trouble.

C–3 8. Virtually all French stores are now open in Hanoi, many for the first time in months. Cabarets with a full quota of Annamese girls are open and are catering to both Chinese and French GI trade. Utilities are functioning but still with a limited capacity. For the first time, the French newspaper L'ENTENTE published news instead of feature material on 20 March. The general tenor of the 20 March edition was "Hanoi Libere."

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington, D.C.

Intelligence Dissemination Number A–66609

Country: French Indo-China.
Subject: Political Information—North Indo-China.
Origin: Hanoi.
Theatre: Indo-China.
Source: [delete].
Subsource: As stated.
Evaluation: C–3.

Original Rpt.
Date of info.: 20 March 1946.
Date of Rpt.: 26 March 1946.
Distributed: 28 March 1946.
Confirmation: Supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages.
Attachments.

General Lu Han is telling United States correspondents that the Chinese are preparing to demand reparations for the Haiphong shelling. Repiton, Chief French General Headquarters Liaison Officer (see paragraph 2 in dissemination [delete]) indicates that the French will counter the Chinese demand with a demand for reparation for shell damage to the TRIOMPHANT and other warships.

Source Comment: Such negotiations will have little repercussions in Hanoi since a settlement would be handled elsewhere at some distant date.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–66557

Country: French Indo-China.	Original Rpt.
Subject: Military and Political Information.	Date of info.: 22 March 1946.
Origin: Hanoi.	Date of rpt.: 25 March 1946.
Theatre: Indo-China.	Distributed: 26 March 1946.
Source: [delete].	Confirmation: Supplement.
Subsource: As stated.	Reference.
Evaluation: C–2.	No. of pages.
	Attachments.

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1. Responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in Haiphong is scheduled to pass from the Chinese to the French on 22 March.

2. Plans for French relief of the Chinese are trilateral, being supported by the indorsements of both General Lu Han and Ho Chi Minh. The large cities and towns are to be jointly occupied by French and Vietnamese troops; the villages and smaller towns by Vietnamese only. Defense Commissioner Tran Van Giap is making 10,000 Vietnamese troops available to augment General Le Clerc's 15,000 troops as specified in the agreement between the French Republic and the Viet Nam. (See attachment 2 in dissemination [delete]). Subsource for paragraphs 1 and 2: [delete]

3. An estimate of total Vietnamese strength indicates between 30,000 and 40,000 troops of which 75% are adequately equipped with small arms. French tactical maps show numerous Vietnamese garrisons, distributed strategically, most of them not exceeding 200, and their command not unified, probably due to a lack of speedy communications. *Sub source:* [delete]

4. Only the most tentative plan for Chinese repatriation has been given the French by General Lu Han's headquarters. The 60th Army, stationed in the Haiphong-East Haiphong-Hanoi area is scheduled to leave on United States ships. The 93rd Army is expected to return overland to Yunnan at an unspecified date. The 53rd Army is the only Chungking Army in Hanoi which has not revealed its intention. Of the three armies, only the 53rd is specifically charged with the maintenance of law and order.

5. In an attempt to improve Franco-Chinese relations, General Le Clerc protested the anti-French attitude of the local Chinese Press and in turn was assured by General Lu Han that he was altering its tone.

6. The French are most anxious to regain properties now occupied by the Chinese, but at the moment are unwilling to press their claims.

Repiton states that the Haiphong-Hanoi railway is usable, as well as the Northbound line, as far as the Chinese border. Transportation on the Haiphong-Saigon railway has been interrupted by several destroyed bridges near Tourane.

STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION NUMBER A–66684

Country : French Indo-China.
Subject : Political Information.
Origin : Hanoi.
Theatre : Indo-China.
Source : [deleted].
Subsource :
Evaluation : A–2.

Original Rpt.
Date of info. : 24 March 1946.
Date of rpt. : 27 March 1946.
Distributed : 29 March 1946.
Confirmation : Supplement.
Reference.
No. of pages.
Attachments.

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1. The fact that the French and Vietnamese have lived together one week peacefully is significant and promising. However, a growing uneasiness and confusion among the Vietnamese is already evident in the native Press and in the private statements of government leaders. The Marxist organ "Truth" considers the 6 March accord rather a truce than a preliminary treaty, and demands the immediate commencement of Paris negotiations and the inclusion of Cochin China in the Viet Nam Republic. The general impression is that the Vietnamese, bewildered by the suddenness of the armistice, do not understand their new status and feel they are being somehow cheated.

2. Ho Chi Minh maintains a restained impatience with French hesitation to begin negotiations. Vo Nguyen Giap told source on 23 March that the Vietnamese could not be expected to remain quiet indefinitely.

3. However, on 24 March the Vietnamese had the satisfaction of seeing some of their troops relieve Chinese sentries around Hanoi. A significant sight was a French officer leading Vietnamese troops to their posts.

4. Comments on the Franco-Viet Nam Military Liaison Group headed by Repiton, Chief French General Headquarters Liaison Officer, are generally favorable. There seems to be a mutual understanding on the military side of the picture.

5. Colonel Trevor Wilson, Chief of the British Mission at Hanoi, is leaving Hanoi at the end of March as the British consider his mission accomplished.

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